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LECTURER OF ST. DUNSTAN'S, IN THE WEST,

LONDON.

IN EIGHT VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR B. BAYNES, 25, IVY LANE, PATERNOSTER-ROW, AND G. OFFOR, 2, PORTERN-ROW, TOWER HILL.

1821.

W. Gracie, Printer, Berwick.

Tappan Pres. Assoc'n.
4-2-1924

3-13-28 F.W.

A

TREATISE

UPON THE

LIFE OF FAITH.

FROM THE AUTHOR's CORRECTED COPY.

The just shall live by his Faith.—Hab. ii. 4.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE design of this little treatise is to display the glory and all-sufficiency of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to encourage weak believers to glorify him more by depending and living more upon his all-sufficiency. Whatever grace he has promised in his word, he is faithful, and he is almighty to bestow, and they may receive it of him freely by the hand of faith. This is its use and office, as an hand or instrument, having first received Christ, to be continually receiving out of Christ's fulness. The apostle calls this *living by faith*, a life received and continued, with all the strength, comforts, and blessings, belonging to it, by faith in the Son of God, and he also mentions the work of faith, its working effectually in the hearts and lives of believers, through Christ strengthening them, and its growing in them, yea, growing exceedingly from faith to faith, by the power of him who loveth them. This is the subject; and it properly belongs to those only who have obtained the true faith, given them of God, and wrought in their hearts by his word and Spirit. Such persons meet with many difficulties every day to try their faith, and to hinder them from depending continually upon the Lord Christ for all things belonging to life and godliness. By what means these difficulties may be overcome is plainly taught in scripture, is clearly promised, and is attained by faith which becomes daily more victorious, as it is enabled to trust, that he is faithful who promised. The strengthening of it I have had all along in view, hoping to be the means, under God, of leading the weak believer by the hand, and of removing

hindrances out of his way, until the Lord thoroughly settle and establish him in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

But I must admonish the reader, that I do not expect this merely from what I have written. It is too high and great a work for any mere man. Faith is the gift of God. And he alone who gives it can increase it. The author of the faith is also the finisher of it: and we do not use the means to set the Lord of all means aside. No. We use them that we may find him in them. It is his presence, which makes the use of them effectual. By this, and this only can any reader of this book be rendered stronger in faith. Being well assured of this, I have therefore looked up to him myself, and it will be for thy profit also, reader, to look up to him in prayer, for his blessing. Entreat him of his grace to countenance this feeble attempt to promote his glory and his people's good. Beg of him to make thy reading of it the means of thy growth in faith, and to accompany it with the supply of his Holy Spirit to every believer into whose hands it may fall. And forget not in thy prayers and praises to remember the author.

I bless God who has enabled me to revise the press, and to put my last hand to the work, by making such additions and alterations, as seemed to me necessary, to render the subject more plain to common readers. In this, and in all things, I desire to approve myself to my Lord and Master, whose I am, and whom I serve, and whatever good I have or do, to him be all the praise. Blessed be his Name this day, henceforth, and through the day of eternity.

TREATISE, &c. &c.

THE persons for whose use this little tract is drawn up, are supposed to be practically acquainted with these following truths; they have been convinced of sin, and convinced of righteousness. The word of God has been made effectual by the application of the Holy Spirit to teach them the nature of the divine law, and upon comparing their hearts and their lives with it, they have been brought in guilty. They found themselves fallen creatures, and they felt the sad consequences of the fall, namely, total ignorance in the understanding of God and his ways, an open rebellion against him in the will, and an entire enmity in the heart, a life spent in the services of the world, the flesh, and the devil; and on all these accounts guilty before God, and by nature children of wrath. When they were convinced of those truths in their judgments, and the awakened conscience sought for ease and deliverance, then they found they were helpless and without strength. They could take no step nor do any thing, which could in the least save them from their sins. Whatever method they thought of, it failed them upon trial, and left conscience more uneasy than before. Did they purpose to repent? They found such a repentance, as God would be pleased with, was the gift of Christ. He was exalted to be a prince and a Saviour to give repentance. Suppose they thought of reforming their lives, yet what is to become of their old sins? Will present obedience, if it could be perfectly paid, make any atonement for past disobedience? Will the broken law take part of our duty for the whole? No. It has determined, that whosoever shall keep the whole law

and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. And let him be ever so careful in doing what the law requires, or in avoiding what the law forbids, let him fast and pray and give alms, hear and read the word, be early and late at ordinances, yet the enlightened conscience cannot be herewith satisfied: because by these duties he cannot undo the sin committed, and because he will find so many failings in them, that they will be still adding to his guilt and increasing his misery.

What method then shall he take? The more he strives to make himself better, the worse he finds himself. He sees the pollution of sin greater. He discovers more of its guilt. He finds in himself a want of all good, and an inclination to all evil. He is now convinced, that the law is holy, just, and good, but when he would keep it, evil is present with him. This makes him deeply sensible of his guilty helpless state, and shews him that by the works of the law he cannot be saved. His heart, like a fountain, is continually sending forth evil thoughts, yea, the very imaginations of it are only and altogether evil, and words and works partake of the nature of that evil fountain from whence they flow: so that after all his efforts he cannot quiet his conscience nor attain peace with God.

The law having done its office, as a school-master, by convincing him of these truths, stops his mouth that he has not a word to say, why sentence should not be passed upon him. And there it leaves him, guilty and helpless. It can do nothing more for him, than shew him that he is a child of wrath, and that he deserves to have the wrath of God abiding upon him for ever; for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The gospel finds him in this condition, as the good Samaritan did the wounded traveller, and brings him good news. It discovers to him the way of salvation contrived in the covenant of grace, and manifests to him what the ever blessed Trinity had therein purposed, and what in the fulness of time was accomplished. That all the perfections of the Godhead might be infinitely

and everlastingly glorified. The Father covenanted to gain honour and dignity to his law and justice, to his faithfulness and holiness, by insisting upon man's appearing at his bar in the perfect righteousness of the law. But man having no such righteousness of his own, all having sinned, and there being none righteous, no not one; how can he be saved? The Lord Christ, a person in the Godhead coequal and coeternal with the Father, undertook to be his Saviour. He covenanted to stand up as the head and surety of his people in their nature, and in their stead, to obey for them, that by his infinitely precious obedience many might be made righteous, and to suffer for them, that by his everlasting meritorious stripes they might be healed. Accordingly in the fulness of time he came into the world, and was made flesh, and God and man being as truly united in one person, as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man. This adorable person lived and suffered, and died, as the representative of his people. The righteousness of his life was to be their right and title to life, and the righteousness of his sufferings and death was to save them from all the sufferings due to their sins. And thus the law and justice of the Father would be glorified in pardoning them, and his faithfulness and holiness made honourable in saving them. He might be strictly just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.

In this covenant the holy Spirit, a person coequal and coeternal with the Father and the Son, undertook the gracious office of quickening and convincing sinners in their consciences, how guilty they were, and how much they wanted a Saviour, and in their judgments how able he was to save all that come unto God through him, and in their hearts to receive him, and to believe unto righteousness, and then in their walk and conversation to live upon his grace and strength. His office is thus described by our blessed Lord in *John* xvi. 13, 14. "When the Spirit of truth is come he shall glorify me; "for he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you;" that is, when he comes to convince sinners of sin, and of

righteousness, and of judgment, he takes of the things of Christ, and glorifies him by shewing them what a fulness there is in him to save. He leads them into all necessary truth in their judgments, both concerning their own sinfulness, guilt, and helplessness, and also concerning the almighty power of the God-man, and his lawful authority to make use of it for their salvation. He opens their understandings to comprehend the covenant of grace, and the offices of the eternal Trinity in this covenant, particularly the office of the sinner's surety the Lord Christ, and he convinces them that there is righteousness, and strength, comfort and rejoicing, grace for grace, holiness and glory, yea, treasures infinite, ever-lasting treasures of these in Christ, and hereby he draws out their affections after Christ, and enables them with a heart to believe in him unto righteousness. And the Holy Spirit having thus brought them to the happy knowledge of their union with Christ, afterwards glorifies him in their walk and conversation, by teaching them how to live by faith upon his fulness, and to be continually receiving out of it grace for grace, according to their continual needs.

The corruption of our nature by the fall, and our recovery through Jesus Christ, are the two leading truths in the Christian religion, and I suppose the persons for whose sake this little tract is drawn up not only to know them, but also to be established in them, stedfastly to believe and deeply to experience them. The necessity of their being well grounded in them is very evident; for a sinner will never seek after nor desire Christ, farther than he feels his guilt and his misery; nor will he receive Christ by faith, till all other methods of saving himself fail; nor will he live upon Christ's fulness farther than he has an abiding sense of his own want of him. Reader, How do these truths appear to thee? Has the law of God arraigned thee in thy conscience? Hast thou been there brought in guilty, and has the Spirit of God deeply convinced thee by the law of sin, and of unbelief, and of thy helplessness, so as to leave thee no

false resting place short of Christ? Has he swept away every refuge of lies? and thus put thee upon enquiring what thou must do to be saved. If not; may the Lord the Spirit convince thee, and in his own good time bring thee to the knowledge of thyself, and to the saving knowledge of and belief in Christ Jesus, without which this book can profit thee nothing. But if thou hast been thus convinced, and the Lord has shone into thy understanding, and enlightened it with the knowledge of the way of salvation, then read on. May the Lord make what thou readest profitable to thine establishment in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus.

There are two things spoken of faith in scripture, which highly deserve the attention of every true believer. The first is the state of safety, in which he is placed by Christ, and is delivered from every evil and danger in time and in eternity, to which sin had justly exposed him; and the second is the happiness of this state, consisting in an abundant supply of all spiritual blessings freely given to him in Christ, and received, as they are wanted, by the hand of faith out of the fulness of Christ. By which means whoever has obtained this precious faith ought to have a quiet conscience at peace with God, and need not fear any manner of evil, how much soever it be deserved, and thereby he may at all times come boldly to the throne of grace to receive whatever is necessary for his comfortable walk heavenwards. Every grace, every blessing promised in scripture, is his, and he may and does enjoy them so far as he lives by faith upon the Son of God: so far his life and conversation are well ordered, and his walk is even, his spiritual enemies are conquered, the old man is mortified with his affections and lusts, and the new man is renewed day by day after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. And from what he already enjoys by faith, and from the hopes of a speedy and perfect enjoyment, the scripture warrants him to rejoice in the Lord with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

It is much to be lamented, that few live up to these two privileges of faith. Many persons who are truly concerned about the salvation of their souls, live for years together full of doubts and fears, and are not established in the faith, that is in Christ Jesus; and several who are in a good measure established, yet do not walk happily in an even course, nor experience the continual blessedness of receiving by faith a supply of every want out of the Saviour's fulness. These things I have long observed, and what I have been taught of them from the scripture, and from the good hand of God upon me, I have put together, and throw it as a mite into the treasury. I am sure it was never more wanted, than at present. May the good Lord accept the poor offering, and bless it to the hearts of his dear people to the praise of the glory of his own grace.

For the clearer understanding of what shall be spoken upon the life of faith, it will be needful to consider first what faith is: for a man must have faith before he can make use of it. He must be in Christ before he can live upon Christ. Now faith signifies the believing the truth of the word of God: so says Christ, "Thy "word is truth:" it relates to some word spoken or to some promise made by him, and it expresses the belief which a person who hears it has of its being true. He assents to it, relies upon it, and acts accordingly. This is faith. And the whole word of God, which is the ground of faith, may be reduced to two points, namely, to what the law reveals concerning the justification of a righteous man, and to what the gospel reveals concerning the salvation of a sinner. A short examination of these points will discover to us a great number of persons, who have no faith at all in the word of God.

First, every man in his natural state before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, has no faith. The scripture says, God hath shut up all that are in this state in unbelief; and when the Holy Spirit awakens any one of them, he convinces him of sin, and of unbelief in particular. When the Comforter is come,

says Christ, he shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not in me.

Secondly, A man who lives careless in sin has no faith. He does not believe one word that God says in his law. Let it warn him of his guilt, and shew him his great danger, yet he sets at nought the terrors of the Lord. He acts as if there was no day of judgment, and no place of eternal torments. He has no fear of God before his eyes. How can such a practical atheist as this have any faith?

Thirdly, The formalist has not true faith. He is content with the form of godliness, and denies the power of it. The veil of unbelief is upon his heart, and the pride of his own good works and duties is ever before his eyes, that he finds no wants of the salvation of Jesus, and is averse to the grace of the gospel. All his hopes arise from what he is in himself, and from what he is able to do for himself. He neither believes God speaking in the law, nor in the gospel. If he believed his word in the law, it would convict him of sin, and forbid him to go about to establish a righteousness of his own; because by the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified, yet this he does not believe. If he believed the word of God in the gospel, it would convince him of righteousness, of an infinitely perfect righteousness wrought out by the God-man Christ Jesus, and imputed to the sinner without any works of his own: for unto him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is imputed for righteousness. To this he dare not trust wholly for his acceptance before God, therefore he has not true faith.

Fourthly, A man may be so far enlightened as to understand the way of salvation, and yet have not true faith. This is a possible case. The apostle states it, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 2. "Though I understand all mysteries, "and all knowledge, yet I may be nothing." And it is a dangerous case, as *Heb.* x. 26. "If we sin wilfully "after that we have received the knowledge of the "truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."

Here was such a knowledge of the truth, as left a man to perish without the benefit of Christ's sacrifice, therefore he wanted that faith, which whosoever hath shall be saved.

What great numbers are there under these delusions? Reader, art thou one of them? Examine closely; for it is of eternal moment. Prove thine own self, whether thou be in the faith. If thou askest how thou shalt know it, since there are so many errors about it? hear what God's word says, Whoever believes truly has been first convinced of unbelief. This our Lord teaches, *John* xvi. 9. "When the Comforter is come, he will "convince the world of sin, because they believe not "on me." He convinces of sin, by enlightening the understanding to know the exceeding sinfulness of it, and by quickening the conscience to feel the guilt of it. He shews the misery threatened, and leaves sinners no false refuge to flee unto. He will not suffer them to sit down content with some sorrow, or a little outward reformation, or any supposed righteousness, but makes them feel that do whatever they will or can, still their guilt remains. Thus he put them upon seeking out for salvation, and by the gospel he discovers it to them. He opens their understandings to know what they hear, and read, concerning the covenant of the eternal Trinity, and concerning what the Godman has done in the fulfilling of this covenant. The Holy Spirit teaches them the nature of the adorable person of Christ-God manifest in the flesh, and the infinitely precious and everlasting meritorious righteousness, which he has wrought out by the obedience of his life and death; and he convinces them, that this righteousness is sufficient for their salvation, and that nothing is required except faith, for its being imputed unto them; and he works in them a sense of their being helpless and without strength to rely upon this righteousness, and through faith in it to have peace with God. He makes them see, that they cannot, by any power of their own in the least depend upon it: for all their

sufficiency is of God. It requires the same arm of the Lord, which wrought out this righteousness, to enable them with the heart to believe in it. They are made clearly sensible of this from the word and Spirit of God, and from their own daily experience, and thereby they are disposed to receive their whole salvation from the free grace of God, and to him to ascribe all the glory of it. These are the redeemed of the Lord. To whom it is given to believe. They are quickened from a death in trespasses and sins, their consciences are awakened, their understandings are enlightened with the knowledge of Christ, they are enabled in their wills to choose him, and in their hearts to love him, and to rejoice in his salvation. This is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit: for faith is his gift; *Eph.* ii. 8. Unto you it is given, says the apostle, *Phil.* i. 29. in the behalf of Christ to believe on him; none can give it but the Spirit of God: because it is the faith of the operation of God, and requires the same almighty power to believe with the heart, as it did to raise Christ's body from the grave, *Eph.* i. 20. And this power he puts forth in the preaching of the word, and makes it the power of God unto salvation. The word is called, 2 *Cor.* iii. 8. the ministration of the Spirit, because by it the Spirit ministers his grace and strength. So *Gal.* iii. 2. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, "or by the hearing of faith?" It was by hearing faith preached, that they received the Spirit: for faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, which is therefore called the word of faith. And thus the word is the means, in the hand of the Spirit, to dispose the hearts of those who hear it, to receive and to embrace Christ; whereby they retain the righteousness of faith, as *Rom.* x. 10. "With the heart man "believeth unto righteousness." The heart is the chief thing in believing: for into it Christ is received, and in it he dwells by faith. The vital union between Christ and the believer is manifested and made known in the heart, and therein it is cemented and established.

With joy can the believer say, "My Beloved is mine, "and I am his," happy for me, we are but one person in the eye of the law, and our interests are but one. Blessed state this! Christ gives himself freely to the believer, who also gives himself up in faith to Christ, Christ as the believer's surety has taken his sins upon himself, and the believer takes Christ's righteousness: for Christ makes over all that he has to the believer, who by faith looks upon it and makes use of it as his own; according to that express warrant for his so doing, in 1 *Cor.* iii. 22, 23. All things are yours, because ye belong to Christ.

This vital union, between Christ and the believer, is largely treated of in scripture. Christ thus speaks of it in his prayer for his people, *John* xvii. "I pray for "them who shall believe on me through their word, "that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, "and I in thee, that they also may be one in us. I in "them, and thou in me, that they may be made per-"fect in one." And in *John* vi. 56. he says, "He that "eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in "me, and I in him;" and this indwelling is by faith, as *Eph.* iii. 17. "That Christ may dwell in your "hearts by faith." And it is the office of the Holy Spirit to manifest this union to their hearts, as *John* xiv. 20. "At that day, when the Spirit of truth is come, "ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in "me, and I in you." And besides these and many other plain words, this union is also represented by several striking images, such as that of husband and wife, who are in law, but one person, the husband being answerable for the wife's debts, and the wife sharing in her husband's honours and goods. It is set forth by the union between a building and the foundation upon which it stands secure; between a tree and its branches, which live because they are in the tree, and grow by the sap which they receive from it; between the head and the members, which by holding under the head live and grow, having a supply of nourishment administered

very part. Under these beautiful images the scrip-
sets forth the reality, and the blessed fruits of this
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union, and enables the soul to give itself up to Christ, that it may be one with him, not in a figurative metaphorical way, but as really and truly, as the building is one with the foundation, as much one in interest, as husband and wife; one in influence, as the root and the branches, the head and the members. So that this is not an empty notion about Christ, or some clear knowledge of him, or a mere approving of his way of salvation; but it is an actual receiving of him into the heart for righteousness to justify, and to dwell and reign there to sanctify; a receiving him as a perfect Saviour, and living upon him and his fulness; waiting upon him to be taught daily; trusting wholly for acceptance to his blood and righteousness: resting, relying, leaning upon his promised strength to hold out unto the end: and hoping for eternal life as the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The saving faith thus receives Christ, and thus lives upon Christ.

Now, reader, examine and prove thyself, whether thou hast this faith. Dost thou believe with thy heart unto righteousness? Thou canst not live upon Christ, unless thou art first in Christ. Thou must be first persuaded of thine interest in him, before thou canst make use of it, and improve it; and therefore the knowledge of thy union with him must be clear and plain, before thou canst have a free and open communion with him. There must be faith, before there can be the fruits of faith; and strong faith before there can be much and

ripe fruit. Little faith will receive but little from Christ. The weak believer is full of doubts and fears, and when he wants comfort or strength, or any other things which Christ has promised to give his people, he is questioning whether he has any right to expect them; and therefore he does not receive them; because he has not boldness and access with confidence to God by faith in Christ Jesus. From hence appears the necessity of being established in the faith. The believer must have clear evidence of his interest in Christ, before he can live comfortable and happy upon Christ: therefore he must look well to the foundation, and see there be no doubts left about his being settled upon it. Christ being the sure foundation, how can he safely build thereon all his salvation, unless he be first satisfied, that he is upon it? The peace with God in his conscience, every act of spiritual life, and the whole walk and well ordering of his conversation, depend upon the settling of this point. It ought to be finally determined, and brought to this issue: "Christ is mine, "I know it from the word of God. I have the witness "of the Spirit of God, and Christ allows me, unworthy "as I am, to make use of him and of his fulness for "the supply of all my needs; and I find I do make "use of him, and thereby I know from daily expe-"rience, that I am in him, because I live upon him." According as this point is settled, so in proportion will be the life of faith. If the believer be thoroughly grounded in it without any doubt or fear, then he may, and will with confidence improve his interest in Christ; but if he still leave it in suspense, his faith can be but little, and therefore he will obtain little comfort or strength from Christ.

Reader, art thou one of the weak in faith? Dost thou feel it? Dost thou mourn for it? and dost thou know, from whence thy faith is to be strengthened? Who can increase it, but he alone who gives it? O pray then to the Lord God to give thee the spirit of wisdom and revelation, that the eyes of thy understand-

ing may be enlightened to see the infinite sufficiency of Christ's person, as God-man, and the everlasting merit of his life and death to save his people from their sins. And whatever hinders thee from seeing the fulness of Christ's salvation, and resting comfortably by faith upon it, earnestly entreat the Lord to remove it. If it be sin, beg of God to make thee more willing to part with it. If it be guilt, pray him to ordain peace in thy conscience through the blood of sprinkling. If it be much corruption, it cannot be subdued, until it be first pardoned. If thou hast got under the spirit of bondage, look up to the Lord Christ for that liberty, wherewith he makes his people free. Whatever it be, as soon as it is discovered to thee make use of prayer, believing God's word of faithfulness; that what thou asketh thou shalt have, and that he will so establish thee that thou shalt go on from faith to faith. May it be thy happy case. *Amen.*

Reader, if thou art an awakened man, convinced of sin by the word and Spirit of God, all thine enemies will try to keep thee from the clear knowledge of thy union with Christ. The reason is plain; because then thou wilt not be able to depend upon Christ's promised strength, and to make use of it by faith, which is almighty to defeat them all. Hearken not therefore to any suggestion, nor be afraid of any opposition, which would hinder thee from seeking to be fully convinced of thine interest in Christ, and of thy being a branch in the true vine. Satan will use all his wiles and fiery darts; and all carnal professors will be on his side, and they will have close allies in thine own breast, in thine unbelief, in thy legal spirit, and in thy lusts and corruptions. Consider why do these enemies fight so hard against thy being safely settled, and comfortably grounded upon Christ by living faith? Is it not because thou wilt then be an overmatch for them, through the strength of Jesus? And does not this plainly shew thee the absolute necessity of knowing, that Christ and thou are one? Till this be known, thou wilt be afraid to

apply to him and to make use of his strength, and till thou dost use it, all thine enemies will triumph over thee. O beg of God then to increase thy faith, that thou mayest be fully convinced of thy union with Christ, and mayest live in him safe, and on him happy. Hear and read his word, and pray for the effectual working of the Lord the Spirit in it, and by it, that faith may come and grow by hearing, until it be finally settled without doubt or wavering, that Christ is thine, and thou art his.

After the believer is thus grounded and established in the knowledge of his union with Christ, it behoves him then to enquire, what God has given him a right to in consequence of this union, and the scripture will inform him, that in the covenant of Grace it has pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in his Son, as the head for the use of his members. He has it to supply all their need. They cannot possibly want any thing, but it is treasured up for them in his infinite fulness; there they may have it, grace for grace, every moment, as their occasions require, and they have it in no other way, and by no other hand, than faith, trusting the word of promise, and relying upon Christ's faithfulness and power to fulfil it; as it is written, "the just shall live by his faith," *Hab.* ii. 3. having received justification to live by faith in the righteousness of Christ, he depends on Christ to keep him alive, and makes use of Christ's fulness for all the wants of that spiritual life, which he has given. He trusts him for them all, and lives upon him by faith for the continual receiving of them all, and according to his faith so is it done unto him.

Let this be well weighed and considered, that the justified person lives and performs every act of spiritual life by faith. This is a very important lesson, and therefore it is taught in scripture as plainly as words can speak. Every thing is promised to, and is received by faith. Thus it is said, Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and if children then heirs according to the promise, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom,

righteousness, and holiness, made for their use wisdom to teach them, righteousness to justify them, and holiness to sanctify them, yea, he has all things in his fulness for their use, as the free grant speaks, 1 *Cor.* iii. 21, *&c.* "All things are yours, whether Paul or "Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or "things present, or things to come, all are yours, and "ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Consider, believer, what a large estate this is: thy title to it is good, and thou enterest into possession by faith. See then that thou make use of thine inheritance, and live upon it. Do not say, when thou wantest any thing, I know not where to get it: for whatever the God-man has of wisdom, righteousness, holiness, power and glory, he has it, as the head of the body for thee as one of his members, for thy use and benefit, and he has promised it to thee in his word. Make free with him then. Go to him with confidence. Thou canst not do him greater honour than to receive from him what he has to give. That is glorifying him. It is putting the crown upon his head, and confessing him to be a perfect all-sufficient Christ when it pleaseth thee, as it did his Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, and when thou art content to live out of thyself upon his fulness for the supply of all thy needs, in time and in eternity. To live thus upon him is his glory, and it is thy privilege, thy interest, and thy happiness. In every state, spiritual and temporal, and in every circumstance, thou canst possibly be in, thou art commanded to look up to Christ, that thou mayest receive out of his fulness, and to depend upon him to save thee from every evil, and to bestow upon thee every good. In thy walk heavenwards, and in every thing thou meetest with by the way, put thy trust in Christ, and expect from him the fulfilling of all his promises. He has all power in heaven and earth for that very purpose. Still rely upon him, and cast thy burdens on him, when thou art tempted, when old corruptions arise, when the world and the devil assault thee, when under a sense of weakness and

dulness in duty, when in darkness and desertion, in persecution and trouble, in pain and poverty, in sickness and death. This is the life of faith. Thou wilt live like a christian indeed, if, being in any of these cases, thou believest that Christ is able, because he is almighty, and willing, because he has promised, to supply thy wants, and then canst trust in him for that supply. Depend upon it thou shalt have it, and it shall be done unto thee according to his word.

After the believer is become one with Christ, and through him has a right to all the riches of grace, and may by faith make use of them as his own, why is he so long in learning this lesson perfectly? Being adopted into the heavenly family, and an heir of the heavenly inheritance, why does not he immediately live up to his privilege, and to his estate? His title is good. The inheritance is sure. All things are become his: for all fulness is in Christ, and by virtue of his union with Christ, this fulness is his, and he may by faith be always receiving out of it every grace and blessing, which Christ has promised: why then does not he at once attain to this happy life of faith? Sad experience proves that young believers do not. They meet with so many difficulties, that they grow up slowly into Christ in all things. They do not attain to a solid establishment in the faith in a day. Enemies without and within stop their progress, insomuch that they often continue little children for a long time. They have the same right to Christ, the same privileges, and the same promised grace, which young men and fathers in Christ have, but they have not learned by experience how to improve their interest in him, and to make the most of it. The difficulties and temptations which weaken their hold of Christ, and stop their growth in him are many; some of the chief are these:

1. They continue little children and weak in faith, because they do not presently attain a solid acquaintance with the person of Christ, and are not thoroughly satisfied, how able he was and sufficient for every thing

he undertook, and how perfectly he has finished every part of his work.

2. This keeps them ignorant of many things in which the glory of his salvation consists; hence they have not clear believing views of its fulness, and of its freeness.

3. By which means they labour under many doubts about the manner of their receiving this salvation. A legal spirit working with their unbelief puts them upon reasoning continually against being saved freely by grace through faith; and,

4. These legal unbelieving reasonings gain great power from their unskilfulness in their warfare between nature and grace, the old man and the new, the flesh and the spirit; and,

5. All these difficulties are mightily strengthened from their hearkening to sense, and trusting to its reports more than to the word of God. While believers are under these difficulties, their faith meets with many checks in its growth, and until they be enabled to overcome them, they continue to be little children in Christ. Their weak faith receives but little from Christ, and it continues weak, because they have but little dependence upon the effectual working of Christ's mighty power. The exceeding greatness of his power is able to strengthen them, and he has promised it, but they dare not trust him. Consider therefore, reader, if thou art one of these babes, why thou dost not grow up faster into Christ.

The first thing that stops thee is the ignorance which is in thy mind about his person, and the prejudice against him, which is in thy carnal heart. These are in all men by nature; and these Satan will work upon in order to hinder the increase of thy faith. He will use all his cunning, and his power to keep thee from growing in that knowledge of Christ, which is eternal life. He will inject into thy heart blasphemous thoughts against his Godhead, and when thou art reading in scripture, or hearing about his being God manifest in the

flesh, he will try to puzzle and perplex thy imagination with a How can these things be? He will represent the union of the two natures in Christ as a thing not to be understood, and as if they, who believed it with the clearest evidence of God's word and Spirit, had only some fancy about it. He has an old grudge against Christ, and will not scruple to tell any lies of him. He was a liar from the beginning and abode not in the truth. Regard him not. Mind what the word of truth says, and pray thou mayest understand it: for the more thou knowest of the Lord Christ, that blessed God-man, the more wilt thou be settled, and established in him. It is written of him, first, that he is God, true and very God, in the holy blessed and glorious Trinity, a person co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, *Isa.* ix. 6. Unto us a child is born, who is the mighty God; secondly, that he is Jehovah, which signifies the self-existent essence, *Isa.* xliii. 11: I, even I am Jehovah, and beside me there is no Saviour; from whence it is evident, that the Saviour is Jehovah, and that he exists in a manner independant of, and distinct from, all other beings and things. St. *Jude* makes the opposition to this fundamental truth the condemning sin of certain heretics, who denied Jesus Christ to be the only Lord God, and our Lord. In the covenant of grace this divine Person undertook to be made man. He who was true and very God was made true and very man; he had a reasonable soul and human flesh, and was in all points like other men, sin excepted. And as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ. This is the glorious Person, who undertook in the covenant of grace to be man's surety. St. *Paul* calls him the surety of the New Testament; and what could there be wanting in him for this high office? He is every way qualified to be the surety for man, who is himself true and very man, who is also God as well as man, and therefore has all the perfections of Jehovah to render what he did and suffered as man's surety infinitely and everlastingly meritorious.

This is the blessed object [illegible] its being united in one Christ. Consid[illegible] God's scripture says of his wonderfu[illegible] What thy faith in him may be estab[illegible] ? existent God, who spake and [illegible] who commanded and they stand [illegible] was made flesh. He came to [illegible] people, to obey and suffer in the[illegible] not his almighty power effect? [illegible] for the Lord God? What obed[illegible] ...ns Father's law demand, which he is not infinitely able to pay? What sufferings can satisfy his Father's justice, which he is not absolutely qualified to endure? for he has every perfection and attribute equal with the Father. On this truth thou must rest; and is it not a sure foundation? In the certainty of it thou must seek to be more grounded every day: because as thou growest in the knowledge of his divine person, thou wilt become more satisfied of his infinite sufficiency to save; and fully convinced of this, thou wilt be enabled from scripture to answer and silence thine own unbelieving thoughts, and reject the blasphemous suggestions of satan against the Lord Christ. Observe then that he is God, and that he is Jehovah. Read and meditate on what the scripture says of his Godhead, and pray that thou mayest be taught of God to understand it: for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost. It is his office to glorify Jesus, by enabling thee to believe him to be Lord and God, and to call him thy Lord and thy God, and to prove he is so, by thy humble dependence upon him for every blessing both in time and in eternity.

It is much to be lamented, that believers in general take so little pains to get a clear knowledge of the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity: for want of which their faith is unsettled, and they are liable to many errors both in judgment and practice. I would therefore most earnestly recommend it to all that are weak in faith, to be diligent in hearing and reading what in scrip-

flesh, he willed concerning the Trinity in unity, look-with a Hways for the inward teaching of the Holy union, and I would direct them to a form of sound words in the common prayer-book for *Trinity Sunday*, which contains the shortest and best account of the subject that I ever saw. "It is very meet, right, and our "bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all "places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, almighty, "everlasting God. Who art one God, one Lord, not "one only person, but three persons in one substance: "for that which we believe of the glory of the Father, "the same we believe of the Son, and of the Holy "Ghost, without any difference or inequality." These are precious words. Meditate, reader, upon them, and intreat the Holy Spirit to enlighten thine understanding with the saving knowledge of them, that being established in the doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, and of the Godhead of the Lord Christ, thou mayest be enabled to overcome the difficulties which arose.

Secondly, From thy not being well acquainted with the nature of Christ's salvation. Concerning which young believers are apt to have many doubts. Carnal reason is strong in them. The spirit of bondage resists with many and mighty arguments, and unbelief musters up all its forces, and there is a long and obstinate fight against being saved freely and fully by the grace of Christ Jesus. But the arguments, which God has provided in his word, when applied by his Spirit, will prevail and overcome. Meditate upon them for the establishing of thy weak faith. Consider, first, the covenant. Salvation is not a thing of chance, or left to man's will or power, but it was contrived by the blessed Trinity in the covenant of grace, and every thing belonging to it was perfectly settled. It is said to be 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 5. an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure. O thou of little faith, why then dost thou doubt! What doubt! of God's love? Here is a covenant springing from his mere love, and from everlasting. Doubt of its being well contrived! Infinite

wisdom orders it in all things. Doubt of its being well executed? It is in all things sure; sure as God's almighty power and faithfulness can make it. What motives are here for the strengthening of thy faith? May the Lord render them effectual.

Reflect, Secondly, upon the undertakings of the Lord Christ, the Surety of this covenant. There was nothing left out of this covenant; it was ordered in all things belonging to salvation, and Christ undertook to perform all things on the part of his Father, that his law might be magnified, and his justice made honourable and glorious; and on the part of the sinner, that he might be saved from all evil, and entitled to all good. And being God and man united in one Christ, he was a proper surety to reconcile God to man, and to reconcile man to God. May these things then sink deep into thy heart, that thy surety has undertaken the whole of thy salvation, to do all for thee, and all in thee, and all by thee. What canst thou desire more for the settling of thy faith?

3. Perhaps thou wilt say, his undertakings were great, but has he fulfilled them; Yes, and so perfectly that he is able to save to the uttermost. He was called Jesus because he was to save his people from their sins; as their surety he was to fulfil the law for them by his obedience, and to suffer the pains and penalties of it by his death and passion. Accordingly in the fulness of time he was manifest in the flesh, and came to do the will of his Father: of his obedience to that will, he thus speaks. "I have finished the work, which thou "gavest me to do." Of his suffering that will he said with his last breath, "It is finished." Observe, whatever he undertook to do in his life and death was finished, and it was demonstrated that as man's surety he had done and suffered every thing ordered in the covenant, by his resurrection from the dead: for then did the Father declare him to be the Son of God with power. Will not all this satisfy thee, O thou of little faith? Here is one more cause of thy doubting remov-

ed; thou canst not deny but Christ has finished every thing he undertook, and in consequence thereof he has all power in heaven and earth to bestow a full and finished salvation. What canst thou now object?

4. Does a thought arise in thy heart? It is finished, but is it so freely given that such an unworthy creature, as I am, may partake of it? Yes; it comes to thee in the way of a free gift. Great, inestimable, and eternal, as it is, yet it is all thine in receiving. Not he who worketh but he who believeth is justified from all things. It is by faith that believers are justified and sanctified, are strengthened and comforted in their walk, by faith they fight against all their enemies, and by faith they conquer, and lay hold of eternal life. And therefore it is all of faith, that it might be by grace. Salvation is wrought out and finished by thy surety, given to thee freely, continued with all its blessings in time and through eternity; as a free gift, to the praise of the glory of free grace. Why therefore art thou discouraged? Hast thou nothing to buy with? Then obey the Lord's command, Come and buy free salvation without money, and without price. How should this motive still add to the establishment of thy faith? For there thou seest whatever thou wantest is thine by believing. Thou mayest have it freely by grace. It is treasured up for thee in the fulness of thy dear Saviour, and thou canst not honour him more, than to make free use of it. What dost thou say to this? Hast thou any thing to object? Canst thou find any fault with the covenant of grace, or with the undertakings of the God-man in it? No, certainly, the covenant was well ordered in all things and sure, and what the Surety of the covenant undertook he has perfectly fulfilled. Salvation is finished on his part. He has glorified the law by his infinitely perfect obedience, he has made divine justice honourable by his sufferings and death, he has brought in everlasting righteousness for his people, and will bring them to everlasting glory: for he has already taken possession of it for them as the

head of the body the church, and he has all power in heaven and earth to save them day by day, until he make them partakers of his eternal salvation. What can thy heart wish for more than such a Saviour, and such a salvation? O! be not faithless then, but believing, and if thou hast any doubts left, endeavour to have them cleared up by reading and prayer, until thy faith be perfectly settled on the divinity of God thy Saviour, and the infinite sufficiency of his salvation. These two points lay at the very foundation of the christian religion. They must be supposed in all its principles, and built upon in all its practice; therefore being of universal influence; if they be thoroughly established thy faith will be stedfast, and thy life well ordered and comfortable. Examine then, and prove thyself here before thou readest any farther. Dost thou believe Christ to be true and very God, in every perfection and attribute equal with the Father? and is his a full and a free salvation? All the following directions depend upon, and can only profit thee, so far as thou believest these two points. Look well then to thy establishment in them. If it be strong, the life of faith will be steady and prosperous; but if it be weak, thou wilt be liable to be tost about continually with errors, and overcome with temptations, especially with those, to which a legal spirit will expose thee, as I purposed to shew under the

Third general head, in which is to be considered, how the little children in Christ for want of being established in the belief of his Godhead, and of his full and free salvation, labour under many doubts, a legal spirit working with their unbelief puts them upon reasoning continually against being saved freely by grace through faith.

He is of a legal spirit, who is under the law, and apprehends himself bound to keep it, as the condition of life requiring of him, Do this and thou shalt live. In his understanding he sees this, and no other way to life, in his will he is continually inclined to it, and in his

heart he loves it; because he fancies it in his own power to attain life in this way, and he can merit it by his own works, which mightily gratifies his self-love, and indulges his pride. The legal spirit reigns over all men in their natural state, but does not discover its tyranny, until it be opposed; and then so soon as the soul is quickened from a death in trespasses and sins, it begins to fight, trying to keep the poor sinner in bondage by its legal workings and strivings, and putting him upon seeking for some good disposition or qualification in himself, on account of which God should love him. Thus the awakened soul under the spirit of bondage, always seeks deliverance by the works of that law, which can do nothing more than bring him to the knowledge of sin, discover to him the exceeding sinfulness of it, and the exceeding great punishment which it deserves; by which means it is always nourishing the doubts and fears of unbelief. And after the Lord has in a measure removed them by a clear discovery of the salvation that is in Jesus, and by the gift of faith, yet still this legal spirit will be trying to bring the soul into bondage again to fear, and it too often prevails. Young believers find it the worst enemy they have to deal with. It is a sly, subtle foe, that seems to intend them a kindness, while it is always on the side of their greatest enemy. It would appear to them to be actuated by a zeal for God, but it is to eclipse the glory of the Lord Christ, to take away the all-sufficiency of his salvation, and to rob them of their great joy and peace in believing.

If any one should ask, how this legal spirit comes to have such power over mankind? The scripture informs us,

First, that all men being God's creatures, are under the law to him, bound to keep it, or bound if they transgress to suffer the threatened pains and penalties. In this state man was created, and in it all men are by nature, and therefore there is in us all a continual leaning to the law, and a desire to attain righteousness by

the works of it. We are wedded to this way of gaining God's favour. The apostle says, there is a marriage union between us and the law, and it, like an husband, has dominion over us as long as it liveth; so that we cannot be married to Christ until that be dead wherein we are held. You may see this in the Jews. How does Moses labour to bring them off from an opinion of their own righteousness? And a greater than Moses has done the same in his discourses against the scribes and Pharisees; yea, the apostles of our Lord were forced to write and preach against this leaning to the law, it gave such disturbance to the true disciples of Christ. And notwithstanding the scripture arguments against it, yet we have great numbers among us, who seek for a justifying righteousness by the works of the law. And they are put upon seeking this,

Secondly, from their ignorance of the law. They are not acquainted with its nature; for it demands what they cannot pay. It insists upon an obedience, spiritual, perfect, and uninterrupted: for the least offence, if but in thought, it comes with its fearful sentence, *Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things, that are written in the book of the law to do them.* On him who does not continue in all things, and not one man ever did, this sentence takes place, and if he was to live a thousand years he could not do any thing to repeal it. The law will always be to him the ministration of condemnation, and the ministration of death, and this is all it can do for him. It provides no remedy, and gives him no hope, but leaves him condemned to the first and to the second death; and yet such is the blindness of the sinner, that he will be still leaning to the law, and afraid to trust wholly to the righteousness of Christ; and this arises,

Thirdly, From his ignorance of Christ's righteousness, which is infinitely perfect, and wants no works of the law to be joined with it in the justifying of a sinner: because it is the righteousness of God wrought out by the God-man for his people, and it is the righte-

ousness of faith, they receive it by faith without works; so that it is directly opposite to the righteousness of a legal spirit. Hence we have many among us great professors too, who are ignorant of God's righteousness; they have not been entirely brought off from a legal bottom, and therefore they talk of being justified without a justifying righteousness, which if God was to do, he would be unrighteous, and which as he has declared he will not do, their fancied justification leaves them still in their sins. They dare not put their whole trust and confidence in the righteousness of Christ imputed unto sinners, and made theirs by faith. They have many fears about imputed righteousness, although the apostle has not scrupled to mention it eleven times in one chapter, *Rom.* iv. and these fears make them read the scripture with such prejudice, that they say they cannot find the expression, *faith in the righteousness of Christ*, in all the Bible. They may find the sense of the expression in Moses, and in all the prophets, and the very words in *2 Pet.* i. 1. Simon Peter a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ to them who have obtained like precious faith with us, in the Greek is ΕΙΣ, in the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Here is faith in the righteousness of Christ, with several glorious titles to recommend it, namely, it is the righteousness of God, of God our Saviour, of Jesus Christ. From whence can men's opposition to this way of justification arise, but from their not being convinced by the Spirit of God of the necessity of Christ's righteousness? It is his peculiar office to convince of this truth. No teaching but his can do it. O that he may do it in the hearts of those, who out of a zeal for God, though not according to knowledge, eclipse the glory of the Lord, and rob afflicted consciences of their comfort by opposing imputed righteousness! It is a righteousness of so high and heavenly a nature, wrought out by another, and so wonderful a Person, is bestowed as a free gift upon the chief of sinners, whereby alone they obtain remission of their sins,

and are made partakers of the kingdom of heaven, and they receive it by faith only without works, which a legal spirit always wants to mix with it, that no one could ever believe in it unless it were given him from above. May it be given to those professors who cannot yet submit to the righteousness of Christ to see their want of it, and with the heart to believe in it unto salvation.

Reader, hast thou not found what an enemy this legal spirit is to thy peace and joy, and how it is always inclining thee to some self-righteousness, through thy ignorance of the righteousness of the law, and of the righteousness of faith? And wouldst thou gladly be delivered from it? Know then that nothing can subdue it, but the bringing into thy conscience a better hope from a better righteousness than that of the law, and when thou art enabled to plead it there against all the charges of sin and Satan, then thou wilt stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made thee free. His is a better righteousness, it is infinitely perfect and everlasting, even the righteousness of God; by faith in this righteousness thou shalt be saved from the law, and shalt receive remission of sins, through it the Father doth accept thee and give thee the Spirit of his Son to lead and comfort and sanctify thee, he doth love thee and bless thee, as his dear child, making all things work together under him for thy good, and keeping thee by his mighty power through faith unto salvation; so that in and on account of this righteousness thou shalt be saved from all the evils of sin, and receive all spiritual blessings in earth and heaven. And this thou shalt have freely, without any merit, or work of the law: for the righteousness comes wholly by grace, and is for thee a sinner as such, and is to justify thee from the condemnation of the law, to turn its curses into blessings, and its threatened punishments into happiness. And this it can do for thee perfectly and everlastingly, so that being found in this righteousness, there is no grace promised in time, or glory in eternity, but it shall be thine. The Lord God promises them to thee in the fullest and

freest manner, to thee, without any exception or limitation, being a sinner and ungodly, though one of the vilest and basest, yet to thee, as such, is the word of this salvation sent. And it will be all thine in the comfortable enjoyment of it, through believing. Thou art to bring nothing to recommend thee, but that thou art a sensible sinner, and thy right and title to a finished salvation is clear from the warrant of God's word, when thou believest with thy heart in the righteousness of Christ. The divine command is, *believe on the Lord Jesus Christ:* the promise is, whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, shall receive remission of sins, shall be justified from all things, shall have everlasting life. Why then dost thou lean to works, since salvation is by faith? Why dost thou disquiet thyself about attaining the righteousness of the law, and thereby suffer the law to disturb the peace of thy conscience, since thou hast a far better righteousness, which ought to reign there, even the righteousness which is of God by faith? For thou art a believer, and although a weak one, yet thou hast as good a title to Christ and his righteousness as the strongest believer in the world: because thy right comes from the free grant of the word of grace, and is apprehended by faith, by which all things are become thine. Thou art an heir of them all by faith in Christ Jesus. O, thou of little faith, why then dost thou doubt? Remember, how highly thou dishonourest the infinite love and free salvation of Jesus, and how much thou robbest thy own soul of its peace and of its growth in grace by thy weak and little faith. Think upon these things, and intreat the Author and Finisher of the faith to strengthen it in thy soul.

But perhaps thou wilt say, How shall I so live upon Christ with my weak faith that it may grow stronger, and I may get the better of my legal spirit? Here is the remedy; may it be to thee effectual! The scripture directs thee to look at Christ God-man as thy surety, who for thee has wrought out a finished salvation, and whatever he has promised in his word relating to this salvation, thou

art to trust him for the making of it good, and to depend upon his faithfulness and power to make it good to thee. Whatever therefore he has done and suffered to save thee from the curse of the law, and from the spirit of bondage, and to make thee free with the liberty of the children of God, thou art to live upon him for these blessings, and by faith to be always receiving them from him in the fullest and largest measure, that he promises them to thee. Look not into thyself then for any qualification, but look unto Jesus; that thou mayest experience more of that liberty wherewith he hath made thee free, and mayest be no longer a babe unskilful in the word of righteousness. Hear what he says, If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed, free from the law of sin and death, free from condemnation at the bar of God, and being freed from the bondage of corruption, ye shall be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. This is the freedom which God promises thee: it is very extensive, has many noble privileges, and vast blessings. By faith all is thine. See how perfectly believers have received all, and may thy faith be like theirs. Rom. viii. 15, &c. "Ye have not received the "spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received "the spirit of adoption, whereby we pray, Abba, Fa- "ther. The Spirit itself beareth witness to our spirits, "that we are the children of God, and if children then "heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ." Observe what is here said of the believing Romans, and by faith thou shalt experience the same, as perfectly as they did.

1. They were freed from the spirit of bondage, under which they once had laboured:

2. They were so freed as to be under it no more; they were not to fear again, as heretofore: for,

3. They had received the Spirit of adoption, and he gave them the evidence of their sonship. Upon which,

4. They believed God was their reconciled Father,

and they had boldness and access to him with confidence. And therefore,

5. They lived in light and walked in love, like his children and heirs, who were to abide in his house for ever.

See also what great freedom the Galatians had, chap. iv. 4, &c. "God sent forth his Son, made of a wo-"man, made under the law, to redeem them that were "under the law, that we might receive the adoption of "sons. And because ye are sons God hath sent forth "the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, "Father: wherefore thou art no more a servant, but "a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through "Christ." O what treasures of grace and consolation are there in this scripture, tending to subdue thy legal spirit. Consider some of them.

1. All men having broken the law, and being under the curse of it, Christ was made under the law, that the law might reach him as the surety of his people, accordingly,

2. By his obedience to the precepts, and by his suffering the penalties of the law, he redeemed his people, who were under the law; so that,

3. They are no longer in bondage to it, but being made free, and having received the adoption of sons,

4. They have the spirit of liberty, sent into their hearts to witness to them, that Christ fulfilled the law for them; and,

5. That the Father loves them, as his dear children, and they love him and serve him without fear, crying to him, Abba, Father;

6. Wherefore they are no longer servants in bondage to any one, but are made free indeed, being now the sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And,

7. If sons, then heirs of God, and free to inherit whatever he has promised to give his children in earth and heaven.

These and many more arguments are contained in

this one scripture, tending to subdue thy legal spirit, and to bring thee to live more comfortably by faith upon Christ, who, as thy surety has fully kept the law for thee in his life and death. Thou art to consider thyself now, not under the law, but under grace, and therefore absolutely free from the condemning power of the law. This thou must maintain against all the carnal reasonings of thy legal spirit, *Christ is my law fulfiller.* And thou wilt glorify him for redeeming thee from under the law, and wilt live in sweet peace in thine own conscience, while thou keepest fast hold of this most blessed and eternally precious truth. May all thy reading and prayer, and the use of all means help thee to grow in the knowledge and experience of it.

There is a very strong bias and leaning in weak believers to a legal spirit, which ought to make them read such promises as I have been mentioning over and over again, that God may thereby encourage them to maintain the liberty which he hath given them in Christ Jesus, and to stand fast in it against the fresh attacks of the devil and unbelief. They should be always jealous over themselves, and watchful against their enemies: because, after they have in a truly gospel and evangelical way through grace got their legal spirit subdued, yet if it be not in the same way kept subdued, it will break out with more power than ever, and will be likely to bring them into bondag again to fear. And this may, and I have known it often happen; after they had obtained some great victories over it and finding it not stir for some time, they flattered themselves they should have but little trouble with it any more. Thus they were drawn off their guard, which gave room to their legal spirit to exert itself again with vigour. This surprised the weak believers, put them upon reasoning and doubting, whether all had been right with them before; and so at the very time when they should have taken the shield of faith, and should have been making use of it, they were questioning whether they had any, which left them unarmed in the midst of their

enemies, an easy prey to every temptation; but an invisible power kept them safe, although they were not comfortable in themselves.

For the encouragement of persons in this case, that they may presently recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, they should observe,

1. What the scripture says of a legal spirit, describing it to be one of the members of their corrupt nature, one of the affections of the flesh, which will never be quite dead, while the breath is in their bodies. It is an enemy that will be always fighting against the Holy Spirit: for they are directly contrary the one to the other, and therefore believers must not dream of any such victory as leaves no more fighting, but must expect sharp battles with their legal spirit as long as ever they live. And,

Secondly, the same means, by which they formerly obtained victory must be made use of again. As often as the legal spirit is tempting, Christ's strength must be opposed to it, and his strength must be brought into the soul by faith in his righteousness, as it is written, Isa. xlii. 24. "Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I "righteousness and strength." Righteousness comes first and is established in the conscience, that it may be pleaded and maintained there against all the charges and accusations of the law. And as often as these arise fresh, still they must be answered and silenced with this plea—In the Lord Christ have I righteousness, he is my lawfulfiller, and I depend upon his promised strength to make me stand fast in that liberty wherewith he hath made me free. And the soul must not only thus quiet and stay itself by faith upon the righteousness and strength of Christ for victory over the present temptation, but must also,

Thirdly, continually do this: because there is in our nature a continual opposition to it. The experience of which is the believer's safety. The abiding sense of his being naturally inclined to lean to legal dependencies, and therefore his want of Christ every moment to jus-

tify him by his righteousness, and to keep him by his strength, will be the surest way to prevent his falling into bondage; for this will keep him very jealous over himself, and will shew him the necessity of living out of himself for righteousness and strength, and while he liveth upon Christ for these by faith he shall not be overcome by any enemy.

The glory of the incarnate God, and his infinite sufficiency to save, have not a greater enemy than a legal spirit, and therefore I have enlarged upon this point, that believers might be convinced from the word of God they were saved from the condemnation of the law. They will never live comfortably till they see the law dead and buried, and then willingly give up themselves to be espoused to Christ, who will make them free indeed. And when they have learned of him to enjoy and walk in their christian liberty, then they will be better acquainted with the warfare between nature and grace, the old man and the new, the flesh and the spirit, which warfare is the

Fourth great hinderance, that stops the growth of faith in weak believers. They are unskilful in it, soon tired of it, and often likely to be defeated. They do not enter into the battle strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, nor are they certain if they fall in battle, they shall be saved with an eternal salvation. These are great discouragements, and until these be removed, they cannot fight the good fight of faith, like good soldiers of Christ Jesus.

The case is thus. There is in every believer an old man, and a new man, nature and grace, flesh and spirit, and these are opposite and contrary the one to the other in their principles and actions; they are always desiring different things, and pursuing different ends, which occasions a continual war between them. The flesh lusteth always against the spirit, and has many and mighty allies on its side, armies of lusts, the faculties of soul and body to bring forth sin, hosts of fallen angels, and all the world that layeth in wickedness. But the

new man renewed in the spirit of his mind has a reconciled God on his side, and therefore he need not fear what any enemy can do unto him, but may bravely face the stoutest of them, even death itself, relying upon that sure word of promise, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* Here is the believer's encouragement to fight, his God will never leave him. Here he obtains victory every day, his God never forsakes him; and after he has fought the good fight of faith, his God and Saviour will make him more than conqueror: he will send death to kill sin. And then the believer will never more have temptation from it, nor sorrow about it. But till that happy time come, he must be fighting against his corrupt nature and all its allies. No peace can be made with them, not even a truce. He must expect no kind of favour from them; because they are God's irreconcileable enemies, and therefore as long as he is in the world, he must be fighting against the world, as long as he has a body of flesh, he must oppose it with its affections and lusts, because they war against the soul, and as long as he is in the reach of temptation he must oppose the tempter, stedfast in the faith, never putting off his armour, until the Lord give him a discharge.

The believer's peace within, and victory without, are closely connected with the clear understanding of this case, and although I have stated it, from the word of God, and agreeably to the sense in which the church of God has always interpreted it, yet for its more full confirmation some testimonies must be brought, which speak to the very point; first, to the believer's having in him an old man and a new; secondly, that these two are at war; and thirdly, that they fight together till death.

First, The apostle says to the saints at Ephesus, chap. iv. 22, &c. "put off the old man, put on the "new." Mind, the same persons had both in them an old man, corrupt according to his deceitful lusts, daily to be put off, and a new man to be put on, and renewed

day by day in the spirit of his mind. The old man is described to have a body of sin with all his members, his affections and his lusts; these must not be obeyed, but mortified. "Let not sin reign in your mortal body "that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof, neither "yield ye your members as instruments of unrighte-"ousness unto sin," Rom. vi. 12, 13. The saints at Rome had sin in them, and it wanted to reign as it had done heretofore in the lusts hereof, but,

Secondly, They were not to obey them. There was in them a new man who was to fight against those fleshly lusts which war against the soul. "The flesh lust-"eth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, "and these are contrary the one to the other, so that "ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. v. 17. Here is battle between two, the flesh, the whole nature of the old man, and the spirit of the new man, born again of the spirit; the cause of it is, the one wills what the other hates, each wants to carry his own will into execution, and these being contrary the one to the other, they fight for mastery; in the battle, the flesh, the old man, is defeated, and the spirit working in the new man conquers, and this lusting and fighting is in one and the same person, in him who is said to be not under the law, to be led by the spirit and to live and to walk in the spirit. In Rom. viii. 7. the apostle calls the flesh the carnal mind, and he says, "It is enmity against God: for it is not "subject to the law of God, neither indeed "can be;" since it is enmity itself there is no reconciling it, it will not, nay it cannot obey God, but is ever lusting and rebelling against his law. The nature of the battle is described at length in Rom. vii. The chapter consists of three parts, first, the believer's liberty from the law to ver. 6. secondly he answers some objections made against the law from its nature and properties, and that in his own person, because it had been the means of bringing him to the right knowledge of sin, ver. 7. and sin being discovered by the law through the corruption of nature, raged and rebelled the more in him, ver. 8.

and the law had made him sensible of God's anger against sin, and of his deserving death and hell for it, ver. 9. to 14. and from thence to the end of the chapter he describes the conflict between the old man and the new, the one consenting to the law, and the other resisting the law. In this conflict there were sharp attacks, in the first he found in himself two contrary principles of action always resisting each other, the old man fighting against the new, from ver. 14, to 18; secondly, when the will of the new man was good through the opposition of the old man, it had not the desired effect, ver. 19, 20; and thirdly, he felt in himself two contrary laws, both requiring obedience, the law of the members warring and rebelling against the law of God written in the renewed mind: for no sooner did his mind, guided by the Holy Spirit, set about any thing which God's law commanded, but he found the law of the members making a strong resistance. This he groaned under as an heavy burden, and was humbled for it before God, expecting pardon from him, and victory every day, and perfect deliverance at last.

I cannot enlarge upon this chapter. Turn to it, and read it over upon the plan which I have here laid down, remembering all along, that St. Paul is describing himself. He ten times says it is himself he is speaking of, from ver. 7. to ver. 14. where he is shewing of what use the law had been to him, when he was first convinced of sin, and from thence to the end he mentions himself thirty-eight times. *I* the apostle Paul, *I myself*, my very self, and not another; *I myself am*, now, at this present, at the very time of writing this; *I myself* whom the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made free from the law of sin and death; I myself to whom now there is no condemnation, for I am *in* Christ Jesus, and I walk after the Spirit, am still at war with sin that dwelleth in me, with the old man, with the flesh, with the law of the members, with the body of sin. Although I have a new nature, and God is on my side, yet it is a hard and a sharp battle.

I find it so. The length of it makes it still more pain-
" ful, and forces me to cry out, O wretched man that
" I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this
" death?" Paul was not out of God's favour, or accurs-
ed, but as the word rendered *wretched* means, he was
weary and tired with his continual fighting; troubled
with the filthy motions of sin rising and striving and re-
belling in him, and giving him no rest; this was such
a hard warfare, that he was ever looking out and pray-
" ing, Who shall deliver me?" He meant wholly, per-
fectly, deliver me from this corruption. He sighed for
it, not because he had sure and certain hope of it; not
because he was ignorant who his deliverer was, but be-
cause he had stedfast faith in him. " Thanks be to
" God through Jesus Christ." This comforted him, and
kept him fighting on with courage. He knew that he
should gain the victory, and through Christ, not through
his own virtues or works, but through faith in the life
and death, in the blood and righteousness of Christ, he
should at last be more than conqueror.

Since this was the case with the apostle, who can
expect a discharge from this warfare until death?
What! says one, is it to continue so long? Yes. The
scripture is very clear to this point, as I was thirdly to
shew.

The seat of the corruption of the old man or of the
flesh is not only in our nature, but is also our very na-
ture itself. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, al-
together carnal and corrupt. It is a filthy fountain
always sending forth impure streams; and therefore
while the believer is in the body, he must either be
fighting against the flesh, or else be led captive by it.
We that are, says *Paul*, in this tabernacle of flesh, do
groan, being burdened with sin and sorrow. And when
did they expect an end of their groaning, and rest from
their burdens? Not till the tabernacle was dissolved
by death. Ourselves, says he, who have the first fruits
of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves
waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our

body. The body will be redeemed from the grave, and raised like the glorious body of Jesus Christ; this is promised, and this we wait for, and until death deliver us from this mortal corruptible body, we shall be groaning under the burthen of it. This was St. *Paul's* case. He had long sighed to be discharged from his warfare, and like an old weary tired soldier, he wished the hard tedious campaign was ended, that he might enter into rest; but hear with what joy he at last cries out, "I "have fought the good fight." Have fought it? What! is the battle over? Yes, just over.—"I am "now ready to be offered, and the time of my de- "parture is at hand—I have finished my course:"—My battle and my life are finished together, and so must thine, reader: Thou art to resist unto blood, striving against sin; for thou art called to fight the good fight of faith, until thou lay hold of eternal life. Since thou art a believer, however weak, and hast a new man in thee, as well as an old, they will be fighting against each other, till thou finish thy course. And if this discourage thee, consider what God has spoken concerning this warfare, and what exceeding great and precious promises he has made to them who are engaged in it. He has promised to pardon those corruptions of the old man, to subdue them, and to deliver thee from the very being of them. Canst thou desire more. Mark well what he says to thee, and be not faithless but believing.

First, although the believer has an old man corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, always warring against the new man, yet the Lord God has promised a free and a full pardon; because he has imputed sin, all thy sin, to the Son of his love, who bore it in his own body upon the tree. After the apostle in *Rom.* vii. had described the battle between them, he makes this inference, "There is therefore now no condemnation to "them who are in Christ Jesus,"—to them who are in Christ, united by faith as members to him their head, and thereby partakers of his righteousness, there is *now* while they are fighting against their corruptions

no condemnation; "For, says he, the law of the spirit "of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the "law of sin and of death," *Rom.* viii. 2. These words demonstrate, that *Paul* was speaking of himself in the 7th chapter. Although he had the corruption of nature still in him, and was fighting against it, yet being in Christ by faith he was made free from the guilt and punishment due to it, therefore he had, and every believer shall have, a full pardon. In consequence of which,

Secondly, he shall subdue the corruptions of the old man. This is promised and shall be made good. The Lord encourages believers to oppose the reign of sin their mortal body, and not to obey it in the lusts thereof, with this promise—"Sin shall not have dominion over "you," *Rom.* v. 14. Ye are under grace, and grace is almighty to subdue sin: because it is atoned for. In like manner he says to the *Gal.* v. 16. "Walk in the "spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." Ye shall not fulfil them either in word or deed. The lusts of the flesh will be in you, but not one of them shall reign over you: the spirit of Jesus will teach you to resist, and enable you to overcome them, yea to crucify and mortify them day by day. And besides this the Lord has promised,

Thirdly, deliverance from the very being of thy corruptions. The time is coming, when they shall not exist in the believer, nor any more be suffered to tempt him. He shall be made holy and blameless, without spot or wrinkle of sin or any such thing. In this perfect state the Father now sees him, and accepts him in the beloved, and after death admits the soul into his presence cleansed with the blood, clothed with the righteousness, adorned with the graces of his dear Son, and body, soul and spirit, shall be in this perfect state in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ—they shall be unblameable in holiness before God, even our father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints. It doth not yet appear how great a perfection

of holiness this will be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall then be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Such are the divine promises. And dost thou not see from hence, reader, what great things thou art to expect in thy present warfare? If thou sayest, How shall I attain all that is promised? Know that it is to come to thee by faith. Christ and all that he has is thine upon believing, and particularly a free pardon for indwelling sin as well as for any other. Consider him as thy surety God-man taking thy sins and sufferings upon himself to save thee from them. By his life and death he has obtained full salvation, which he gives to thee freely. And thou hast received it. Thou canst not deny but thou art a beliver, and it is written—"All "that believe are justified from all things," from the corruption of their nature as well as the corruptions of their lives. Know then, that there is no condemnation to thee. The Judge himself says so. And when he acquits, who shall lay any thing to thy charge? Here thou must hold through the power of the Lord, if thou wouldst have the spiritual warfare successfully conducted. Abide by the sentence of God, and keep condemnation out of thy conscience. Have it ready to plead against all charges, from whatever quarter they come, that Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and of death.

Here I must refer thee back to what has been said concerning Christ and his finished salvation. Thou now seest how necessary it is thou shouldest be well established in the belief of his Godhead, and the infinite sufficiency of his salvation; so that he is both able and willing to save thee from all thy sins, and all the miseries due to them, and to bestow upon thee eternal happiness, and to bring thee by his almighty power safe to the enjoyment of it. All this he will give thee, not for working but in believing. I entreat thee therefore to read again and again, what has been before said upon these subjects, and the good Lord help thee to apply it

to thy present case, that thou mayest be fully assured thou art in Christ, and that there is no condemnation to thee.

But perhaps thou art ready to say—stedfastly do I believe all this; but I do not find such victory over my corruptions as I could wish, nay I think at times they rage more than ever. Here thou forgettest the Lord thy strength. Thou dost not make use of him, and therefore thou failest. The woman with the bloody issue grew worse and worse, till she went to Christ: so wilt thou. Why is it given thee to know Christ in the spirit, but that thou shouldst go to him daily, and plead his promise—Lord, thou hast declared that sin shall not have dominion over thy people, I believe this word of thine cannot be broken; and therefore helpless in myself I rely upon thy faithfulness to save me from the dominion of such and such a sin (as then tempts thee.) Put forth thy power, O Lord Christ, and get thyself glory in subduing my flesh with its affections and lusts. And then trust him to make his word good, and wait the event. Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away, than sin, any sin thus left with Christ to be subdued shall reign over thee.

If thou sayest—I think I seek for victory over sin in no other way, and yet I do not attain it so completely, as I desire.—Depend upon it thou art under some mistake: for Christ is almighty to fulfil every promise in its largest sense and fullest meaning, and there never was a believer who could justly charge him with the breach of his word. Perhaps thou dost believe, that power to subdue sin comes from Christ, and thou art expecting it from him, but hast thou not some legal dependence, some notion of thy own working together with him? Search and see. Dost thou commit all to the Lord, who is to do all and in all? Is the whole battle left to him, wisdom and courage, and armour, and strength, and patience, and victory, are all from the Lord? If thou art not doing this simply, thou art not living by faith upon Christ, but thou art fighting in thine own

strength, and depending upon some inherent stock of grace, or knowledge, or experience. While these proud selfish motives put thee upon asking his help, he will not give it thee: because thou dost not wholly depend upon him for it.

Or perhaps Christ does not appear on thy side because thou art proposing some wrong end. Thou art working and striving against sin to establish a righteousness of thine own, which is to be some part of thine acceptance before God, and thou hast been trying in thine own strength to get thy corruptions quite subdued, but they were too strong for thee, and therefore now thou art glad to make use of Christ's help. And if he would do the work for thee, then thou wouldst have confidence in the flesh, and this thy fancied holiness would be the ground of thy rejoicing before God. Is it not so? If it be, thou wilt never succeed upon this plan, Christ will not give his glory to another, nor put the crown of his gospel-grace upon the head of thy legal dependence.

Or perhaps thou art expecting from Christ what he has not promised, such a victory over thy corruptions, that they shall not fight again for some time, or that they shall be quite dead and buried. And so they shall be in the Lord's appointed time. But now he calls upon thee to fight against them, he provides thee armour for that purpose, even the whole armour of God; and he requires thee to resist unto blood, striving against sin, promising thee daily victory. This is thy present state of warfare. To this thou art now called, and there is no discharge in this war. O beware then, as thou lovest thy soul, of a false peace. Thou wilt be sadly deluded, if thou ever supposest that thy fighting is over, before thy course be finished. The good fight of faith must continue till death: for till then, corruption being in thee, thou must oppose it, relying upon God for promised victory over it. He is able to save thee from the very being of it now as well as in heaven. But it is not his mind and will. Here he will have

thee to live by faith, which is every moment to keep thee dependent upon Christ, or thou wilt fall. This is to exalt his grace, and to subdue thy selfish legal spirit; to humble thy pride, to put thee upon prayer and watchfulness, to make sin more hateful, and heaven more desirable, and to secure the glory of every victory to him, whose strength is perfected in thy weakness. These are some of his gracious purposes in keeping thee continually dependent upon his strength; and if he has made thee willing to fight and conquer to the praise of the glory of his grace, then thou wilt experience that blessed promise—"sin shall not have dominion over thee." And it will not be long before sin shall not have a being in thee.

Reader, if thou hadst fallen into these or any other mistakes concerning the subduing of thy corruptions, mind what is written, and what is promised. Having first received through faith in the blood of Christ the pardon of thy sin, then as one of his good soldiers thou art to fight against it all thy life. He being on thy side promises to subdue sin for thee. Without him thou canst do nothing in this warfare, and therefore thy faith resting on his promise is to wait the fulfilling of it. He has given thee his word, that he will use his almighty power for this purpose. To that word must thou look, believing that Christ will bring thee victory, continually, if thy faith fail not, greater, as thy faith increases, complete, when the good fight of faith shall be ended, and thou shalt rest from thy labours. All this he stands engaged to do, and his power is able to fulfil his engagements, and thy faith will bring thee happy experience of his power. When corruptions rise, temptations are strong, enemies numerous, dangers on every side, that is the time to glorify Christ, by making use of his promised strength. Then put thy trust in the Captain of thy salvation, and fear not. Look unto Jesus, and look at nothing but him. The battle is his. He will fight for thee, and thou shalt hold thy peace. Leave him to direct all, to do all, and to finish

all relating to it; and then, as he can get all the glory, thou shalt see what a salvation he will bring thee. O that thy faith did but reach to the extent of his promises! How successful would be thy spiritual warfare, such victories over thine enemies, corruptions so subdued, the world so crucified, Satan so defeated, as thou canst now scarce believe? The Lord increase thy faith. Look up to him for it: because as thy faith increases, let the battle grow hotter and hotter, thou wilt find thyself safer, and more reason to give thanks to God through Jesus Christ thy Lord.

For want of attending to the important truths already considered, and of bringing them into constant use and exercise, young believers are liable to fall into another great mistake, which keeps their faith weak, and stops its growth, namely, a hearkening to sense, and trusting to its reports, which is the fifth general head I purpose to consider.

They are seeking to be established, and they think, that they should have no doubt of their being true believers, if they had but the testimony of sense, and comfortable feelings to assure them of it. And being used to judge in this way in other matters, for it is our strongest evidence in natural things, they are disposed to expect the same in spiritual; and they are the rather disposed to it, because sensible comforts are promised in scripture: which being very desirable and pleasing to nature, they are apt to covet them too much, and from not regarding what the scripture says about them, they are apt to seek them in a wrong way and for a wrong end. Sense judges from what it sees, and draws its inference from what it feels; so that its report to the conscience, either of a believer's state, or of his growth in it, is not from unchangeable things, which would settle the conscience in peace, but from changeable things which leave room for continual doubting. Sense also looks at the fruits of faith more than at the object of it, and if the believer has been misled, and taught to confound these two together, he

will be at great uncertainty in judging of his state: for instead of making the word of God, he will make his comforts the ground of his faith, and as these are more or less, so will his faith be. When he has comfortable feelings then he will think himself a believer, and when he has none, then he will think himself an unbeliever, changing his judging of himself, as his feelings do, like the wind, and varying as his comforts do, like the weather. This is a common case. I have seen the sad effects of it in the lives of many of my acquaintance, who from being taught thus to judge of themselves, were tost about for several years, up and down, now comforted, then doubting, and could not get any solid establishment, till the Word and Spirit of God convinced them, that sense was not to be the ground of their believing, nor the object to which they were to look. Sense judges by feeling, and report what it sees. Sense says, now I am in the favour of God: for I feel it, Now he is my God; for I find him so, I am comforted. Now he demonstrates it to me: for I feel nearness to him in prayef, and sweet answers. Now I am sure my duties and services are acceptable: for I am quite lively in them, and I come from them with warm affections. Now I cannot doubt, for I feel the assurance of his love to me. And when sense has lost those comfortable feelings, then it draws contrary inferences. —Now I am not in the favour of God: for I do not feel it. Now he is not my God for I do not find him so, I am not comforted, &c. What can be the issue of this, but continual wavering and changing? For our feelings are sometimes more, sometimes less, as every believer experiences. What an unsettled state then must he be in, who has no way to judge of himself, but by those changeable things? What room does he leave for continual doubting, and what trouble and misery does he thereby bring upon himself, as well as dishonour, to the unchangeableness of God in his nature and promises?

If the poor weak believer should say, I am convinced

of this, and I should be glad to have my faith so fixed, that I might be freed from doubts and fears. Then let it rest upon the word of God, which is the only ground of believing, and is therefore called the word of faith, upon which faith is built, and by which it is nourished and grows up. The believer should receive and rely upon what God hath spoken, and because he hath spoken it: for his word changeth not. It abideth the same for ever: therefore what it truly reports, stands upon an immoveable rock. Sense and feeling may report things contrary to it, but the believer can silence them with *God hath spoken it:* for his faith has evidence of things not seen, and he does not form his judgment by the things which are seen, but by the things which are not seen. Generally speaking faith judges the very contrary to what sense does, and will not believe what sense perceives. Abraham against hope believed in hope, so do all his children. They believe the pardon of sin, victory over sin, and the death of sin, the immortality of the body, though crumbled to dust and atoms, the second coming of Christ, and the eternal state of happiness or misery. Faith looks at God's word, calling the things which be not, as though they were, and is commonly forced to contradict sense. Sense judges from what it sees—Faith from what God says. Sense is governed by what appears—Faith by what God says shall be. Sense looks inward—Faith looks outward. Faith can answer the seeming contradictions, which sense opposes to it, from the word of God which cannot be broken. And when sense is ready to despair, and all its fine frames and feelings are gone, then it is the believer's happy privilege, still to trust in the Lord, and to have a good hope because of the word of his grace.

But perhaps thou are ready to say, it is written, that there is great joy and peace in believing, yea, joy unspeakable and full of glory, True, these are what faith produces, and not what it is. These are the fruits of faith, which it brings forth in most abundance from the

inexhaustible fulness of Jesus. The more simple the believer is, the more he eyes Christ the object of faith, and the word the ground of faith, the more clear and distinct will the actings of his faith be, and consequently it will bring greater peace into the conscience, and more joy into the affections. But still these fruits are not faith: no more than the fruit is the tree. The fruits do not go before faith, but follow it, and grow from it. This is God's order. He gives us his word to be the ground of our believing, and by believing all things promised in the word are made ours, then we go on comfortably, and are happy; but when sense is put in the place of the word, then the consequence is, that weak believers have got a changeable rule to judge of themselves by, which hinders them from being established in believing, aud from attaining the promised peace and joy.

Some may begin to object, what! are you against all lively frames, and sensible comforts? No, God forbid. I would have them spring from the right cause, that they might be more pure and fixed, than they commonly are. God's word and promises, are an unchangeable foundation to rest upon, even when sensible feelings are gone; because Christ revealed in the word, and laid hold of in the promises, changeth not. Therefore, reader, for thine own sake, and for the glory of God, take heed what thou buildest thy faith upon. Beware of making any thing, that sense reports to thee, the ground of it, but rest it upon that which abideth for ever. The word of God is a sure foundation. It will never fail thee. Thou mayest safely depend upon it, because it cannot be broken, and stedfastly rely upon Christ to make its promises good to thee. There is thy object. Look at him. And since he is thine, thy Saviour and thy God, make use of him as such, and trust body and soul, and all things belonging to them in his hands, and among the rest, thy comforts. Be content he should give them to thee as seemeth him good. Set not thy heart upon them, nor follow him, as the

multitude did for the sake of his loaves and fishes, and the dainties that he gave them, who, when these were with-held, soon forsook their kind Benefactor. Thou art by faith to make up all thy happiness in him, and in him only; and he himself being thine, let him give thee or take away what he will besides, thou hast enough. What! is not this comfort enough, that thou hast got the pearl of great price, the infinitely rich inestimably precious Jesus? Who has the wisdom of God to contrive what is best for thee, boundless love to dispose him, and almighty power to enable him to give it thee, and he has promised it; canst thou desire more? Walk then with him by faith, and not by sight. When the word of God is the ground of thy faith, which rests there, and is grown to a fixed settlement, then thou wilt be enabled to go on comfortably, whatever thy frames and feelings be; yea, when these are at the lowest ebb, thou wilt not be thereby discouraged. Suppose thou art walking in darkness, thou canst walk by faith; because thou hast a promise, "Who is among "you that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let "him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his "God," *Isa.* l. 10. Still let him trust and believe. Why? Because God is *his* God still. Mind that, his God still; this blessed relation still subsists, and faith may draw comfort from it in the darkest hour. Suppose thou art in heaviness through manifold temptations, the word says to thee, "heaviness may endure for "a night, but joy cometh in the morning," here thou "mayest quiet thy heavy heart, and rest with confidence, till the Lord deliver thee out of thy temptations. Suppose God hideth his face from thee, thou hast the example of those in the same case, "I will wait "for the Lord that hideth his face from the house "of Jacob, and will look for him," *Isa.* viii. 17. Wait in faith looking for him, and thou shalt see the light of his countenance. Suppose all other comforts fail; thou hast one still, worth more than all.—"This God "is my God for ever and ever. He will never leave

me nor forsake me." This is the happiness of the true believer, he is enabled to maintain his confidence, when sensible feelings are no more. And thou seest reader, how this happiness is attained, and how it is preserved. It is by trusting to things which change not, the word of God, the Son of God and his promises, all which are in him, yea, made in him, and in him, Amen fulfilled by him. May the Lord help thee simply to trust his word, and to live upon Christ for the fulfilling of it, and then thou wilt indeed get, what thou art now seeking in vain, a comfortable frame, and will be enabled to maintain it against all the discouragements of sense. To that end search the scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation; and let it be thy daily request to the Lord, to make thee strong in faith, that thou mayest not stagger at his promises through unbelief, but mayest against hope believe in hope. Beg of him, when sense goes contrary to the word, to enable thee still to believe it, and not to doubt of Christ's faithfulness to fulfil it—and ask for strength to walk every moment by faith and not by sight. Thus the Lord will carry thee on safely and sweetly from faith to faith, till thou receive the end of thy faith, even the salvation of thy soul. May it be so. Amen.

St. *Paul* has been my guide hitherto. He says, *Heb.* v. 13. that a babe in Christ is one who is unskilful in the word of righteousness. To this determination of his, I have had an eye all along, and have accordingly endeavoured to remove those hinderances out of the way of young beginners, which chiefly arise from their unskilfulness in the word of righteousness. Righteousness signifies strict justice, with respect to God it is paying him the full demands of his holy law: in this sense there is none of us righteous, no not one. The God-man Christ Jesus, the surety of his people, came to work out such a righteousness for them, and the word reveals it, sets it before them in its infinite freeness, and in its infinite sufficiency to justify from all things. The word is also the means in the hand of the Spirit, of bringing them with the heart to believe unto

righteousness, and therefore the scripture is called the word of righteousness, and being unskilful in it signifies want of experience in the management of it, unskilful in the knowledge of the person of the Lord our righteousness, who is true and very God, as well as true and very man; unskilful in the nature of his righteousness, that it is absolutely perfect and everlastingly meritorious, so that any sinner by receiving it will be not only delivered from sin, and all the miseries due to sin, but will also be entitled to life and glory; unskilful in the gift of righteousness, how freely God bestows it, nothing being required to make it the sinner's but receiving it, and therefore it is called the righteousness of faith: because by faith he trusts in it for salvation, and for all its blessings in earth and heaven, and expects them as the fruits of righteousness,—unskilful in experience, not knowing how to plead this righteousness against the charges of the law, of conscience, and of the accuser of the brethren, and therefore apt to fall into a legal spirit to be distressed in their warfare between the old man and the new, and to covet and to rely more upon sensible feelings, than upon the sure testimony of God in his word. These are some of the principal difficulties which young believers meet with, and they all arise from their unskilfulness in the word of righteousness, and therefore I have particularly considered some scripture motives for removing them out of the way. And after thou hast perused these motives, have they been the means of settling thy judgment, comforting thy conscience, and strengthening thy faith? Dost thou see more of Christ's grace and power to save thee a sinner than thou didst before, and therefore canst trust him better, and in time of need make more use of his promised grace? If this be thy case, give him the glory, and may he carry thee on from strength to strength. But if thou hast received no improvement from reading thus far—What is the reason? Perhaps thou art under some of the temptations here described. Search and see. And whatever it be, either in doctrine

or experience, which hinders the increase of thy faith, may the Lord discover it to thee, and enable thee to overcome it, that thou mayest be no longer a babe unskilful in the word of righteousness, but mayest grow up to be a young man strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

The apostle *Paul* has directed me how to speak to the babes in Christ; and another apostle shews how they grow up to be young men, and thereby he furnishes me with matter for the second part of this treatise on the life of faith; "I have written unto you, "young men," says he, "because ye are strong and the "word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome "the wicked one," 1 *John* ii. 14. These young men knew the principles of the doctrine of Christ; they were established in the belief of his Godhead; of the infinite sufficiency of his salvation, of the free gift of all its graces and blessings promised to him that worketh not, and received by faith only, and all treasured up for the believers use in the fulness of Christ Jesus, to whom he is to bring nothing to recommend him, but the promise of the grace which he then wants and a dependence upon Christ to supply that want. These young men had attained to a good degree of knowledge and experience in these truths. They began to be able to keep the evidence of their union with Christ clear and distinct, and to improve it by their communion with him in all his offices. But notwithstanding their establishment in these points, they had many temptations and great difficulties—still they knew but in part—still they had a fleshly corrupt nature, to watch over, and to fight against, always inclining them to trust to the law, to their feeling to any thing but Christ, and always disposing them to yield to the suggestions of the devil, and to the allurements of the world. This warfare, instead of ceasing grows hotter and hotter, but they grow stronger. It is the peculiar character of the young men in Christ *to be strong*: they have learnt where their strength lays, and they put it forth. They

go down to battle not trusting in any power or might of their own, but strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. He is their strength. When the enemy cometh in like a flood, then to Jesus they look for safety and victory—" O our God we have no might " against this great company that cometh against us, " neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon " thee." The abiding sense of their own weakness keeps them dependant upon him, so that the more they feel of their helplessness, the stronger they grow: because they live more upon Christ for strength, which illustrates that seeming paradox of the apostle, " When " I am weak, then am I strong"—when I am most sensible of my own weakness, then am I strongest in the Lord, his strength is then perfected in me. And his strength is put forth in the effectual working of it by believing. It is not, neither can it be inherent in them, who without Christ can do nothing, but it is brought in by faith; nor does faith bring it in to lodge it or lay it up in store, till it shall be wanted, but when it is wanted, faith then regards the promise, looks up to Christ to fulfil it, and receives strength out of his fulness. And being his, freely promised, and freely given, it is therefore called the strength of grace, " Thou " therefore, my son, says *Paul* to *Timothy*, be strong " in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Strong faith gets strong grace from Christ, according as it is written: —" All things are possible to him that believeth:" for according to his faith it shall be done unto him. If his faith reach to the full extent of the promises he shall find all things possible, which God hath promised, yea he shall be able to do all things through Christ strengthening him.

This is the life of these young men in Christ. They are strong in him, living upon his promised strength, and by faith receiving it. They live not upon any thing in themselves, but whatever they stand in need of, and whatever they have a promise for, that they expect shall be given them by the power of God their

Saviour. They see themselves poor helpless creatures, full of continual wants, and no means in their own power to supply them. The sense of this empties them of self-greatness and self-dependence, and the abiding sense of this keeps them humble and dependent upon Christ. Thus the Lord teaches them how to live out of themselves, and to be always receiving out of the Saviour's fulness grace for grace. They have his infinite storehouse to repair to, in which there is treasured up for them every thing that they can possibly want. Happy for them their God has promised to supply all their need out of the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus, and by faith they have an abundant supply to the praise of that God, who keepeth his promise for ever.

In him they live—he is the Lord and giver of spiritual life, as *Paul* says—I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. They are made strong in him. "The "Lord is the strength of my life," says the Psalmist, Psal. xxvii. 1. that life which I live by the faith of the Son of God has all its strength from him.

And is continued by his power—"For none can "keep alive his own soul," *Psal.* xxii. 29. "It is God "who holdeth our soul in life, *Psal.* lxvi. 9.

And is kept by faith—"Ye are kept by the power "of God through faith," 1 *Pet.* i. 5. Whatever strength the believer wants to enable him to bear hardship, endure the cross, fight his spiritual enemies, daily gain victories over them, he expects it from God, and through faith he receives it, and is kept—yea so kept,

As to be confirmed unto the end. He that is able to keep believers from falling, will keep them until they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. Thus the life which Christ begins by his grace he continues by his strength; and every act of this spiritual life is from him. The will, the power is his; for he doeth all, and in all. These young men were so well assured of this, that they lived upon Christ for strength, and they received it; they were strong in him. Their faith viewed him in his exalted state with all

power in heaven and earth, and engaged as their covenant head to use it for them, to make them and to keep them alive to God. On this power they depended. And whatever promise they had of its being used in their behalf, and pleaded it out at the throne of grace, and trusted Christ with the fulfilling of it; he never disappointed them. They were made strong, and stood fast in the Lord; who never withdrew his supporting arm, therefore they never ceased to put their whole trust and confidence in him.

When the enemy sees them thus strong in the Lord through faith, it stirs up his devilish malice and makes him burn with envious rage. He leaves no temptation untried to draw them from Christ. He is well skilled in cunning wiles and sly devices for this purpose. He does not begin with tempting them to open sin; that would at once discover his wicked design: but he artfully tries to sap the foundation, and to weaken their faith. If he can get them from their dependance upon Christ, he carries his point; and too, too often he succeeds. Oh! beware, reader, of every thing; suspect it, let its appearance be ever so fair and good, which in the least tends to weaken thy fast hold of Christ. Cleave to him with full purpose of heart, as long as ever thou livest: for the enemy's whole plan is to separate thee from him. Formerly he tried to do this by distressing thee about thy sins—how they could be pardoned—whether being so great, so many, the blood of Christ could cleanse from all: now thou hast through believing received forgiveness of sins, he will try to do the same by distressing thee about thy duties. Sometimes he will try to bring guilt into thy conscience by suggesting to thee thy many failings and short comings in them—the disorder of thine imagination—thy wanderings in thy prayers——thy dulness in hearing and reading the word—the little life and power thou findest in thine attendance upon the ordinances—and the coldness of thy love to God and man. If he can get thee to dwell upon these things so as to forget Christ, then

he has made way for this insinuation. How could it be thus with thee, and thou a strong believer? And if he can get thee to reason upon it, then he has thee fast, thou art catched in his snare.

But if the Lord has taught thee not to be ignorant of Satan's devices, as soon as the thought arises, whether thou art in Christ, because of such failings, thou wilt know from what quarter it comes, and wilt immediately resist it. So that the temptation will make thee stand faster; it will drive thee closer to Christ, make thy dependance stronger on his blood and righteousness; put thee upon making more use of him as thy intercessor and advocate with the Father, and help thee to live more out of thyself by faith upon him. Thus Christ becomes precious, thou art more humble. The snare is broken, and thou art delivered.

When the enemy sees this, his implacable malice will soon tempt thee again. He has another deep laid stratagem relating to thy duties, and that is from their being unsuccessful. Thou hast had something laid much upon thy heart, and thou hast carried it to God in prayer, and thou hast waited long, but no answer comes. Upon this Sátan takes occasion to suggest—Now you see God does not give you what you ask, although he has promised, ask and ye shall have; the fault cannot be in him, therefore it is plain you are not in his favour; his promises do not belong to you. And if he can thus work a little upon thy impatience, he will soon get thee into doubting and unbelief. Here thou mayest see how all the wiles of Satan tend to one point; namely, to separate thee from Christ, and how necessary then is it, that thou shouldest have this settled beyond all question, that Christ and thou art one. If this be maintained in thy conscience, then Satan's stratagem is defeated: for Christ being thine he will give thee every thing that he has promised; and although thou hast it not just at the time thou hast fixed thyself, yet he knows best. Thou shalt certainly have it, if his infinite wisdom sees it good for thee, and if he

does not see it good, his love will give thee something better. Thy faith must wait God's time. Strong faith can wait long. Having such a promise as this to depend upon—they shall not be "ashamed who wait for "me," Isa. xlix. 23. thou mayest with confidence wait, and be a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises; who by faith regarded the promises, by patience waited for the fulfilling of them, and although they waited long, yet they succeeded at last, and did inherit every grace and blessing, for which with faith and patience they had been waiting. Go, and do thou likewise.

Upon the failing of these temptations, the enemy has another ready. Since he cannot get thee off thy guard by bringing thee into doubting and unbelief, he will attack thy faith in another way. He will come like an angel of light, and seem to be Christ's friend and thine. He will allow thee to be a child of God, and to be strong in faith. The more clearly thou art satisfied of thy union with Christ, the more will he improve, if thou art not aware, this thy certainty to his own wicked purposes. He will try to keep thine eye upon thy great graces and high gifts, he will flatter thee exceedingly upon them, and will tempt thee to view them with a secret delight, every now and then insinuating, what a great christian thou art—how few there are like thee—to what an exalted state thou hast attained—what temptations thou hast overcome—what victories thou hast gained over Satan—and how safe thou art now, fast upon the rock! And if he finds this pleasing bait is not instantly rejected with a Get thee behind me, Satan; then he will begin to work upon thy self-love, and to give thee many plausible reasons for self-admiration, so that thou shalt first look pleasing at, then fondly love, and at last sacrilegiously dote upon thy wonderous attainments. Thus he will lift thee up with pride, and will try to draw thee into his own crime, and into his own condemnation. What a dangerous temptation is this! How many have I known who fell

into it! If thou sayest, by what means shall I escape it? Mind the first approach: for it is coming upon thee, as soon as thou beginnest to think of thyself more highly than thou oughtest to think. Thou art in thyself a poor miserable helpless sinner, and to this very moment without Christ thou canst do nothing. Thou canst not do one good thing, nor overcome the weakest enemy, nor take one step in the way to heaven, without Christ: nay thou canst not think one good thought without him. What hast thou then to be proud of, and to stir up thy self-admiration? Nothing but sin. The humble abiding sense of this tends to thy safety: for while this is ever present with thee—"In me, that "is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing," it will lead thee to live by faith upon Christ for all good things. And being all his, and received every moment from him as his free gift, thou wilt be glorifying and exalting him in all and for all, knowing that he resisteth the proud, but he giveth grace unto the humble. The Lord keep thee humble, and then thou wilt have grace to escape this cunning wile of the devil.

If thou shalt say, alas I am fallen into it, How shall I recover myself! Remember his case who in his prosperity said he never should be moved, the favour of the Lord had made his mountain to stand so strong, Ps. xxx. vi. 7. He was too confident in himself, and was moved. How did he recover his standing? "I cried "unto the Lord, and unto the Lord I made my sup-"plication. Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me, "Lord, be thou my helper." His prayer was heard, he found mercy to pardon his offence, and help to raise him up, and his mourning, he says, was turned into joy and gladness. Look up as he did to the Lord Christ. Plead thy pardon through his promised mercy, and beg of him to enable thee to walk more humbly with thy God. Then shall the Psalmist's experience be thine, and thou shalt escape the snare, which was laid for thy precious life.

These young men having thus overcome the devices,

which Satan had contrived to weaken their faith, must expect a fresh attack from him. He will tempt them concerning the ground of faith. He sees they are strong, because the word of God abideth in them, therefore he will use all his cunning and power to weaken their trust in the word and promises of God. By the incorruptible seed of the word faith is begotten, and by the same word it is nourished up, and strengthened, growing exceedingly from faith to faith. The word, which is the sole ground of faith, reveals the covenant made by the eternal Trinity for the salvation of sinners, and makes many free promises of every covenant blessing to him that believeth. These promises may most stedfastly be relied upon; because of the unchangeable nature of God, who makes them. All his perfections are engaged for the fulfilling of his word; so that what he has spoken has an actual being and existence. He says, and it is done—saying and doing are the same with him. Let there be ever so great a distance of time between the word spoken and the thing done, yet this is real as any thing now in being: because it exists in the mind and will of God, is revealed in his word, and by his faithfulness and almighty power is to be established at the time appointed. How is it possible then that this word should be broken? There is no matter of fact of more undoubted evidence, nothing in futurity, not even the rising of the sun to-morrow, so fixed and certain as the accomplishment of God's promises to him that believeth. These young men in Christ were most assuredly persuaded of this truth—They knew that heaven and earth should pass away before one tittle of God's promises should fail. They looked upon them all as made in Christ, in him Yea and in him Amen, made in him, and fulfilled to him, as the head of the body of the Church, and in him fulfilled to all his members. As certainly as every one of them has been made good to him the head so will they be made good to his members. He has all power in heaven and earth committed to him for that very purpose. Whoever by believing

is joined to him, he has thereby a right and title to every promise, and may boldly sue it out in time of need: and then it is Christ's office and glory to fulfil the promise. If mountains of difficulties stand in the way, the believer need not fear or doubt. Christ is upon the throne. What are difficulties against his almighty power? besides, Christ has already given him good security. He has put into his hands the pledges and earnests of the promised inheritance, and how is it possible he should fail in fulfilling his engagements; and putting him in due time into actual possession? Read what the apostle says of this subject. Turn to the passage; for it is too long to quote, Heb. vi. from verse 11 to the end of the chapter; in which you may observe these particulars.

1. The heirs of promise are apt to be full of doubt; and to have strife in their consciences about their right and title, to all the graces and blessings of salvation:

2. God was willing out of his infinite mercy to establish their right and title to them beyond dispute, and to put an end to all strife;

3. Therefore he engaged by promise to give them all those graces and blessings; and

4. To shew the unchangeableness of his will herein, he confirmed the promise by an oath.

5. It is impossible that God should lie in his promise, or that he should be perjured in his oath.

6. Therefore here are two immutable things to strengthen the faith and hopes of the heirs of promise:

7. While their faith rests upon those immutable things, it will always bring them strong consolation.

8. When enemies, dangers, and temptations attack them, they are safe by fleeing for refuge, to lay hold of the hope set before them in God's immutable promises.

9. This hope will be as useful to them at such times, as an anchor to a ship. By it they will ride out all the storms of life, until Jesus their forerunner bring them within the veil, where their anchor is now cast,

and put them into eternal possession of all the promises.

With what rich and copious matter does this scripture abound, tending to shew the absolute safety of resting upon God's promises! How strong are the arguments to persuade the heirs of promise, to put their whole trust and confidence in the faithfulness of their God! who having provided an infinitely glorious and everlasting inheritance for them, was willing to make it over to them in the strongest manner of conveyance, and therefore he has given them the promise and the oath of God, which cannot possibly change or alter, that their faith might never doubt or waver, and their hope might at all times be sure and stedfast. And until he bring them to the inheritance itself, he has given them many sweet and blessed promises of all things needful for their temporal and spiritual estate, upon which he would have them not only to live comfortably at present, but also to receive them as part of the inheritance, allowed them for their maintenance, till they come to age, and enter upon the possession of the whole. And what God intended in his promise and oath, has its effects in a good degree among those, who have the word of God abiding in them. They cast their anchor where he commands them, and they are not only safe, but also, in time of the greatest troubles and temptations have strong consolation. When enemies come, corruptions arise, and difficulties are in the way; they have a promise, and a promise-keeping God to depend upon. Whatever straits they are in, the word abiding in them brings some promise of support and deliverance: the promise shews what God has engaged to do, and faith receives the fulfilling of his engagements. When they draw nigh to God in duties, in ordinances, they know what he has promised, to them that wait upon him, and they judge him faithful who hath promised, and lo, he is present with them. In short, while they live like themselves as the heirs of promise, they are preserved from all evil, and want no

manner of thing that is good. This is their happy case, thrice happy because the means used to deprive them of their happiness are over-ruled of God for the establishing it. The enemy rages against them, but in vain. He was a liar from the beginning. The word is truth, and he abode not in it, therefore he hates it, and with a greater hatred because the Lord has made it the means of strengthening those believers. He knows that all his temptations will be fruitless, while the word abideth in them. He fears no weapon formed against him, like the sword of the Spirit: he has felt its sharpness and its power: with it the Captain of our salvation cut Rahab, and wounded the dragon, and with it all his good soldiers resist the devil, and make him flee from them. For these reasons he has a great variety of temptations to weaken the believer's trust in the word, and his reliance upon the promises of God.

Sometimes he attacks them in a matter where his hopes are founded in their ignorance: he is cunning to spy out the particular way in which they have been led, and their readiness to maintain their ground, by making use of the promises suited to that way. He resolves therefore upon some new temptation, with which they have never been exercised: and he watches the favourable opportunity to inject it with all his strength. Upon his doing it, the soul is put into a great hurry, because it has no promise ready to apply to the present case: for want of which the understanding is confused, faith wavers, doubt enters, and Satan carries his point. This demonstrates the necessity of searching the scriptures, and meditating upon them night and day. In them God has graciously treasured up all sorts of promises. There is not a possible case for a believer to be in of spiritual or temporal concern, but there is a promise suitable to it, which he ought to have ready against the hour of temptation. If he has not, he neglects the Lord's kind provision, and lays himself open to the enemy's attack. Reader, if thou wouldst not be ignorant of Satan's devices, follow

Christ's counsel—Search the scriptures. Remember, they are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith, in Christ Jesus: therefore store up his promises —pray him to sanctify thy memory to retain them, and to enable thee to make use of them in every time of need.

If this temptation fail, the enemy will soon have another ready. I have known him often try, and often succeed in endeavouring to take off the attention from the most easy parts of scripture, and to fix it upon those parts which are hard to be understood. Upon those the believer dwells too much, and puzzles himself. His head grows confused. He consults commentators, and they confuse him more. And if he does not fall from hence into questioning the truth of scripture, yet he certainly neglects the right use of it, forgetting it is the means of building himself up in his most holy faith. Reader, whenever thou art tempted about difficult texts, look up to the incarnate Word, and pray him by his Spirit to open thine understanding, that thou mayest know what thou readest, and if thou still dost not find the meaning of them made plain to thee, pass them by for that time. Do not puzzle and distress thyself about them. Perhaps when thou meetest with them again, they will appear easy, and Christ will give thee light to see and to comprehend them.

If thou sayest, I do look up to him to teach me, but nevertheless, I find many hard and difficult texts. Remember thou knowest but in part, and therefore thou standest in need of daily teaching. These texts are profitable, if they humble thee, and make thee live more upon the teaching of the divine prophet. The humbler thou art, thou wilt be the more teachable. The lower thou sittest at his feet to hear his words, thou wilt learn the most. The master himself has declared, "Whosover shall humble himself as a little child, the "same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." If these difficult texts thus humble thee, and make thee live more upon Christ's inward teaching, they will be

the means of thy growth in saving knowledge. Thy hearing and reading the word in a constant dependence upon him, will keep the from thee dangerous errors, and heresies of the times. Most of those arise from unlearned and unstable men, full of pride and self-conceit, whom God resisteth, but he giveth grace to the humble.

If he has given thee grace to hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast learned and been assured of, the enemy will change his attack, and pursue thee with new temptations. Envious of thy happiness he will be often assaulting thee, and trying to move thee from thy stedfastness. He will at times insinuate every lie that he can raise against the word of God, and he will not begin with reason or argument, but by way of surprise, with sudden injections darting into the mind doubts, like these—How do I know the scripture is inspired? What proof have I? And if these be not immediately rejected, he will follow them like lightning with others: How can that be inspired which is full of contradictions, and full of doctrines above reason? Who can defend the matters of fact related in it? The language is low and mean, unworthy of God—The scripture is false—perhaps there is neither God nor devil.

These blasphemous thoughts sometimes put the believer into a hurry and confusion, and through the suddenness and violence of them greatly distress him. The apostle calls these assaults "the fiery darts of the "wicked one"—darts, because he throws them with all his might against the soul, and fiery, because he would have them to catch hold of, and to enflame its corruptions and lusts. And they do, if the shield of faith be not ready to stop their force, and to quench their fire. This is a piece of the armour of God prepared for the believer's safety at such times, and the right use of it is this: The Lord having promised to be a shield to them that put their trust in him, and to compass them about with his favour as with a shield, the believer looks

up when these fiery darts are flying thick about him, and says,—" O Lord God of hosts, who hast promised " that thy faithfulness and truth should be my shield " and buckler, now establish thy word unto thy servant. " In thee, O my God, do I put my trust, save me in " this hour of temptation." Then the battle becomes the Lord's. He is engaged to put forth his strength to shield thee from the enemy. Thus thou shalt conquer, and shalt happily experience what is written—" Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

He will flee for a season, but will return again. He has other temptations, and he will try them all to disparage the word of God, and to lessen the believer's confidence in it. Sometimes he will insinuate—how can these things be—in what way or by what means can such a promise be fulfilled? If you begin to reason upon the point, he will get you from your strong-hold and conquer you. Beware of his lies, and have always your answer ready—" It is written." What God hath said put your trust in, if all the world gainsay it: for he is faithful who hath promised, and all things are possible with him.

If this temptation does not succeed, and he cannot bring you to doubt of the truth of the promises, then he will try you about your right to them. When you are in darkness or walking heavily, in sickness or any trouble, and you have been praying for deliverance, but Christ does not presently answer you, then he has a favourable opportunity to suggest—Now you see the promises do not belong to you, Christ will not hear you, and therefore you have been deceiving yourself with a vain notion of faith. This is a common temptation, against which still oppose—" It is written." Thy case be it what it will, has a promise, either of support or deliverance. If thou art not delivered, yet if Christ support thee, so that thy faith and patience fail not, does not this shew his infinite goodness to thee? He will have thy faith tried, and he will put it into the fire, not to consume it, but that it may come like gold out of the

furnace purer and brighter. And what if thou art in the fire a great while, thou wilt see more of his tender mercies in keeping thee there, and wilt thereby learn to live in a more simple dependence upon him. Cast not away therefore thy confidence in the written word. The promises in it stand faster than the strong mountains. If all the powers in earth and hell should join, they cannot defeat one single tittle of them. When the world and all the works therein shall be burnt up, and the place of them shall be no more found, then the promises shall stand fast as the throne of God, and shall receive their full and perfect accomplishment through the ages of eternity.

These are some of Satan's temptations against the young men in Christ, who are strong, because the word of God abideth in them. His design is to weaken their reliance upon its promises. Till he can do this, he despairs of success: and therefore he tries every method, which his wicked cunning and rage can invent. His busy active spirit is night and day plotting against the word of God. See a lively picture of his utter hatred to it in the parable of the sower. While the good seed is sowing, the devil is indefatigable in picking it up. He exercises all his wiles to keep it out of the hearer's hearts, and he prevails with the greater part to reject it; among those who seemingly receive it, he cheats three out of four, so that the word does not take root, nor bear fruit to perfection. Since Satan is thus successful, is it not absolutely necessary, reader, that thou shouldest be well acquainted with his devices? And the word abiding in thee, the ingrafted word, will both make thee acquainted with them, and also strong to resist them: because then thou wilt be taught by Christ's wisdom and strengthened by his almighty power. As thou growest in the sense of thy want of him, and livest in a closer dependence upon him, thou wilt understand more of his word, and experience more of his power. By which means the enemy's continual attacks, driving thee to Christ for the fulfilling of his promises, will make thee

continually safe. Let the roaring lion rage, what hast thou to fear? Let him go about seeking whom he may devour, the Lord is thy shield and thy defence: in him is thy trust. Thou hast his promise, that he will preserve thee from all evil, and will make all things, even Satan's spite and rage against thee, work together for thy good. How dear and precious then should the word of God be to thee! If thou art weak, because it is the means of thy growing, and being nourished up; and if thou art strong, because by its abiding in thee, thou wilt be established. May it be thy study and thy delight, and may every reading of it bring thee to a better acquaintance with, and a greater dependence upon the adorable Jesus. And if thou desirest thus to profit from the scriptures, I would advise thee, reader, to observe two things, which will be much for Christ's glory, and for thy edification.

First, in thy frequent and careful perusal of the Bible (and mind, thou canst not read it too much) take particular notice of the promises, which are most suited to thy age, state, and condition in life; because these God has graciously made for thy use, and about these the enemy will be most busy with thee. Treasure them up then in thy memory, and have them ready against the time of need, looking up,

Secondly, to Christ for the fulfilling of them. All the promises are made in him, and made good by him: thou art therefore in an humble dependence upon his faithfulness and power to expect whatever thou wantest, and he has promised. Trust him, and he will not fail thee. Stagger not at any of his promises through the seeming impossibility of their being made good; but depend upon his almighty power, and thou wilt find him a faithful promise-keeping God, whose word standeth fast for ever and ever.

Thus thou shalt not only be safe but shalt also overcome the wicked one, which the apostle John makes the last part of their character, who are strong in the Lord. They overcome him by the strength of their

faith. They hold fast their confidence in the Lord's promised strength, and he fights for them. That mighty arm which bruised the serpent's head, brings them victory, as it is written of that noble army mentioned Rev. xii. 11. "They overcame the accuser of "the brethren by the blood of the Lamb, and by the "word of their testimony." Through faith in his blood they were pardoned and justified freely, and they knew that in him they had righteousness and strength, therefore they were at peace with God, and the accuser of the brethren could not lay any thing to their charge. Thus they were delivered from his power, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; and they testified this by adhering to the word of truth. They believed that whatever Christ had therein promised, he would fulfil to them, and they bore their testimony to their being safe in depending upon his word in the most trying circumstances. They would not give it up whatever they lost for trusting to it: nay, they stuck stedfastly to its truth, although it cost them their lives for maintaining their testimony; for it is said of them, "they loved not their lives unto the death," that is, they loved the truth more than life, they were not afraid publicly to own, that their trust and confidence was in the blood of the Lamb, and they believed they should be infinite and everlasting gainers by holding fast the word of their testimony unto death. And the Lord was with them, and mightily strengthened them, so that they joyfully sealed their testimony with their blood, although they died in flames, and in the most exquisite torments. Thus they overcame Satan. A most noble company of those conquerors are now standing round the throne of the Lamb, enjoying his exceeding great and precious promises: he has crowned them with glory —he has clothed them with robes washed and made white in his own blood—he has wiped away all tears from their eyes, and taken all cause of sorrow from their hearts—he has put palms into their hands to shew that they are eternal conquerors, and that they shall stand

confirmed in bliss for ever and ever. May thou and I, reader, ere long, join them; and until that happy time come, may our faith be daily more established in the blood and righteousness of the Lamb of God, that we may be growing in our love to him, and in our dependence upon him, until he admit us to see him as he is.

Through much exercise and fighting these young men, strong and mighty in the scriptures, grow up to be fathers in Christ; whose character is thus drawn by the apostle *John*, 1 Epis. ii. 14. "I have written "unto you fathers, because ye have known him that is "from the beginning," namely Jesus Christ, whose stile and title it is to be from the beginning, as he himself speaks in Prov. viii. 22, 23. "The Lord possessed "me in the beginning of his way, before his works of "old. I was set up from everlasting, from the begin-"ning, or ever the earth was." He was a person in the Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, but was set up in his office-character from everlasting to the beginning of the ways and works of God. Upon account of what he was to do and suffer in man's nature according to the grace of the covenant of the ever blessed Trinity, he was the Creator, and is the Preserver of the universe; for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, and by him all things subsist; and he is the beginning, the first cause of all things in nature, and also in grace, the head of the body the church. In the same manner our Lord speaks of himself, Rev. i. 1. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the "ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and "which is to come, the Almighty." He is in and from the beginning, being the first cause of all the divine works in creation, in providence, and in redemption, the Author and the Finisher, the First and the Last in all, which shews the great propriety of describing him here by this name. The apostle is treating of the highest state of a believer, and he says it consists in knowing, that Jesus Christ is all and in all. Whatever good

there is in his kingdom of nature, from him it had its beginning, and by him it is preserved: whatever good there is in his kingdom of grace, he is the author of it, by his power it is continued, and when brought to perfection he is the finisher. He is the beginning, he is the ending of all the counsels, and of all the works of God. In this light these fathers had learned to consider the Lord Jesus: they knew that he was to do all for them, and in them, and by them; they not only knew it speculatively, but had also experimental knowledge of it. "Ye have known him that is from the be-"ginning," have known him, and tried him, and found him to be what his name signifies. And this is the right knowledge of Christ—not such as the devil has; he could say, I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God—not such as too many nominal Christians have, who profess that they know God, but in works they deny him—not such as many professors attain, for whom it had been better not to have known the way of righteousness than after they had known it to turn from it. These fathers knew Christ by the inward teaching of his Word and Spirit, whereby he made himself known to them, as he does not to others. For he fulfilled to them the great promise of the new covenant—"I will give them a heart to know me, that I "am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will "be their God," Jer. xxiv. 7. The covenant is well ordered in all things and sure, particularly with respect to the quickening of the soul from a death in trespasses and sins, and to the renewing of its faculties, that they may be capable of knowing God, and to the enlightening them, that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ may shine unto them, even unto the heart, enlivening it with holy and heavenly affection to the person, to the offices, and to the glories of the blessed Immanuel. Whereby the believer, thus taught of God to know him aright, can now trust him, hope in him, and love him; which graces are strengthened from the consideration of God's standing related to him as his cove-

nant-God, and of his being one of God's redeemed people; from which relations he has a right to, and by faith may enjoy every covenant-mercy in time, and shall be a partaker of them all in eternity. This is the knowledge, concerning which so many and such great things are spoken in scripture, and which St. *John* says these fathers had received: they had attained by the Spirit of Wisdom and revelation to that knowledge of Christ, which is life eternal; and the same Spirit enabled them to be continually growing and increasing in the knowledge of Christ. As he shines more clearly into their hearts, he dicovers to them more of their wants. He makes them better acquainted with themselves, and lets them feel more of the workings of their corrupt nature, and of their own entire helplessness. Thus by his light they see deeper into that mystery of iniquity, which is in them, and they grow in the sense and experience of it, all their lives. Day by day some failing, short coming, infirmity or temptation leads them to more lowly and humbling views of themselves, and brings them fresh discoveries of their fallen and helpless state. While they attend to what is passing in their own breasts, every moment something will be speaking for Christ—"Without me ye can do nothing." It is this abiding sense of their wants, and faith in his promises to supply them, which lead them to be constantly looking unto Jesus. Many wants do not discourage them, for his promises are as many as their wants can be—nor great wants, for he has given them exceeding great promises—nor continual wants, for he has promised them grace every moment. As they grow in the knowledge of themselves, they see more need of living upon Christ in the several offices, which he sustains. The daily experience which they have of their own ignorance, and sinfulness and helplessness endear to them their divine Prophet, Priest, and King. The continual sense of their want of him makes them glad to live in a settled fixed dependence upon his fulness, and to be always receiving out of it. They would not live

otherwise if they could. They know that their dear Saviour will manage better for them than they could for themselves. He has taken their affairs spiritual and temporal into his hands, and he can make no mistakes. His infinite love is guided by unerring wisdom, and its blessings are bestowed by almighty power. Happy for them, they and theirs are under the care of this best of friends. They know it, and are sensible of their happiness. Daily experience brings them fresh proofs of the love and power of Jesus; which makes them wish for more, still more faith, that they may glorify their blessed Saviour by trusting him more. However, in this they are growing, increasing day by day in their knowledge of the salvation, and gaining a closer acquaintance and fellowship with the person of God their Saviour, until they come to see him as he is.

This is the character of those believers who are stedfast in the faith, and are become fathers, able now to teach others also. They have attained to that knowledge of Christ which is life eternal, and they are daily pressing forward. What they already know of him increases their desire to know more. And by being always conversant with him, (for without him they can do nothing) they have continual opportunities of making new discoveries. In him are laid up treasures of every thing that is great and good. His riches are unsearchable, infinite and eternal. There is no coming to the end of them. Believers are persuaded of it, and therefore they try to dig deep into this golden mine. It is all theirs. The farther they go, the more is their faith strengthened, and the more precious Christ becomes: for they find such an excellency in the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, that their souls hunger and thirst to know more of him. The more they attain, the more the appetite increases, and nothing can perfectly satisfy it, but the full enjoyment of Christ in glory, when they shall know, even as also they are known. Till that blessed time come, they will be

growing in grace, and in the knowledge of God their Saviour.

This is the distinguishing mark of these fathers, they are pressing forward. They have not yet attained to the perfect knowledge of Christ, but they are going on to perfection: and they make an happy progress. God meets them in and blesses the means, which he has appointed for their daily growth. In those he requires them to depend and to wait upon him, and he gives them clearer discoveries of the adorable person, and of the gracious offices of the Lord Christ, and thereby enables them to live more by faith upon him, for all things belonging to their temporal, their spiritual, and their eternal concerns. These particulars will include the principal acts of the life of faith, and while we take a short view of them, may every page, reader, be made the means of increasing and strengthening thy faith in the Lord Jesus.

First, they grow in the knowledge of his person, which is altogether wonderful; so that they can never come to the end of his perfections, nor to eternity can they shew forth all his praise; for he is God and man in one Christ—Jehovah incarnate—Immanuel, God with us. This is the great mystery of godliness, God manifested in the flesh: in which he came amongst us, that he might be the second Adam, who is the Lord from heaven; that as the first Adam by sin had ruined all those who are born of him after the flesh, so the second Adam might save all those who are born of him after the Spirit. And for this end he has all power in heaven and earth committed to him, he has all fulness, yea the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him, that he might be the head of the body the church, and that out of his fulness his members might be receiving grace in time and glory in eternity. Of this divine Person all the prophets have spoken since the world began; and what they have spoken in many words the apostle sums up in a short description, Col. i. 15, &c. where he is treating of that Person in the Godhead, who covenant-

ed to come into the world to save sinners; "who is the "image of the invisible God, the first-born of every "creature; for by him were all things created that "are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and in-"visible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or "principalities or powers, all things were created by "him and for him, and he is before all things, and by "him all things consist. And he is the Head of the "body the church, who is the beginning, the first-born "from the dead, that in all things he might have the "pre-eminence, for it pleased the Father that in him "should all fulness dwell." In which words these three glorious truths are declared of Christ Jesus; first, that he created all things visible and invisible; secondly, that he upholds them all by the word of his power; thirdly, that he has redeemed unto himself a peculiar people through his own blood, who are his church, and he is to them what the head is to the body, the head of authority, the first in rank and dignity, and the head of influence, from whom life and motion and sense are communicated to all his members: for in him they live and move and have their being. In all things he is first, or has the pre-eminence, he is Jehovah the Creator and the Preserver of all things, Jehovah incarnate, the Head of his church, and the Saviour of the body. This is the blessed object of faith: and what can there be conceived beautiful, useful, or happy, what excellency is there or perfection, which is not in its highest degree in this most adorable God-man? What can a believer want, what can his heart desire, which is not here treasured up for his use? Here is a Surety perfectly qualified, as man to act and suffer for man, as God to merit infinitely and eternally by what he did and suffered, and as God-man he has now all fulness of wisdom, and righteousness and holiness, and strength, and every thing needful for his people's happiness. Whither then should they go, but to him for every grace and blessing? And to him they do repair, according to the command—"Look unto me and be ye

" saved all the ends of the earth," Isa. xlv. 22. The promise to them who are looking unto him, is very extensive—" My God shall supply all your need accord-" ing to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus," Phil. iv. 19. By him they expect a continual supply of all their theytemporal and spiritual needs, and therefore on him would have their eyes ever fixed, looking unto Jesus. While by faith their eyes are kept steady upon him, they will be discovering something new in this wonderful God-man, and receiving something out of his fulness, to strengthen their hopes, and to inflame their affections. He will grow more lovely in their sight, fresh beauties will discover themselves, new words of delight will appear: for all the glories of heaven and earth shine in their fullest lustre in his person. The believer sees them at present: for by faith he can see him that is invisible, and although he has not such a perfect vision, as they have who standing round his throne see him face to face, yet he hopes to enjoy it soon! and he has even now this peculiar pleasure in viewing the glories of his God and Saviour, that he can truly say of him " this is my Beloved, and my Friend," here I fix, and on him I rest; I want to look no where else for any good, since it all meets and centres in one object: for it hath pleased the Father and the eternal Spirit, that all fulness should dwell in the Son of God, and he is my beloved Saviour, and my dearest Friend; he is the Chief among ten thousand in my affection, yea he is altogether lovely. The more I live by faith upon him, the more I love him: for I experience such tender compassion in his heart, and such a kind concern for me and my interest, that the love of Christ constrains me to love him again. He endears his person to me by continual favours. I do love him, but not so much as he deserves. I would increase, and abound more and more in love to him, as his mercies increase and abound to me; but a grateful sense of them, and love to him for them are his own gifts, for which, as well as for his mercies, I must be content to be indebted to

him for ever and ever. Lord shed more of thy precious love abroad in my heart; enlarge it in true affection to thee, and make all that is within me bless thy holy name.

Reader, stop a little here, and consider: Art thou one of these believers? Hast thou a warm heart for the person of Christ? Dost thou see in him, and in its highest degree every thing that is lovely, and art thou growing and abounding in love to him? If this be thy present happiness, thou wilt find many powerful motives to increase it in the 45th and 42d Psalms. Read them, and see whether thou canst so mix faith with what is said in them of the incarnate God, as to conclude with David—"Whom have I in heaven, but thee, and there "is none upon earth, that I desire besides thee." If thy heart be thus enamoured with his love, then thou hast got a key to the book of Canticles; for thou art the spouse of Christ. Mayest thou experience what is therein said of the glories of thy heavenly Bridegroom, and mayest thou grow in love to his adorable Person, by finding continual tokens of his love to thy soul in the several offices, which he sustains for the dispensing of his favours. In these offices he is always endearing himself to his people. And this is the

Second thing, whereby the fathers in Christ grow in the knowledge of him. There is not a want, which sin has brought upon believers, but there is an office in Christ, where it may be supplied; and the sense and feeling of that want, leading them to trust in him upon the warrant of his word and promise, will certainly bring them a supply in the hour of need. His offices are many, but they may be all included in these five. He is the Saviour, the Prophet, the Priest, the King, and the Advocate of his people.

The SAVIOUR, Jesus, a dear name, descriptive of his infinite grace, and sweetly suited to the sinner's wants. Whatever pollution or guilt he has contracted, whatever misery he deserves to suffer in time or in eternity, Jesus is Jehovah, almighty to save him: for he was called

Jesus, because he was to save his people from their sins. Whatever they stand in need of to make them happy, wisdom, righteousness, holiness, comfort or strength, it is all in the fulness of Jesus, freely promised, and by faith received, as it is written, "Ye are saved freely "by grace through faith," and saved for ever: for Jesus is the Author of eternal salvation. The spirits of just men made perfect in glory, are said to be crying with a loud voice—"Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon "the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever." So that the name Jesus is dear and precious to the saints in heaven; they are happily employed in ascribing the glory of their eternal salvation to the Lamb of God. And the believer has at present a part of their happiness; for Jesus is the Saviour. He can trust him for all the promised blessings of his salvation, and live by faith upon him for the receiving them. As every moment some of them are wanted, so the Saviour's love in bestowing them is more experienced; faith in him is thereby strengthened, and love to him increased. And these graces will be continually growing, while the believer views the state of guilt and misery, from which Jesus has saved him, the state of safety in which he has placed him, and the blessings which he has promised him in life and death and in eternity. Must not such a Saviour become more precious for continuing day by day such free and unmerited benefits? And who can receive them, sensible of his unworthiness, without rejoicing in such a salvation, and admiring and adoring the goodness of the Saviour? Oh most blessed Jesus, increase the faith of thy people, that they may glorify thee more by depending upon thee for all the promised blessings of thy salvation. Teach them how to do this as the great

PROPHET of the house of God. This is another of his gracious offices, suited to the ignorance of his people: for when sin separated them from God, they then lost the light of life, and had no means left in their own power to discover God and the things of God. Hear

what two infallible witnesses say to this fact—"There "is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh "after God." Mind, here is no exception, the prophet knew not one; neither did the apostle—"All the Gen- "tiles had the understanding darkened, being alienated "from the life of God through the ignorance that is in "them, because of the blindness of their hearts." To man in this state of ignorance what could be so suitable as a prophet? And what prophet like him, who being God is possessed of infinite wisdom, and being God-man has that infinite wisdom for his people's use? He was made unto them wisdom, that by his divine teaching he might enlighten their understandings, and by leading them into all truth, might make them wise unto salvation. He begins his teaching with discovering to them their ignorance, which is a hard lesson to learn, but he uses such mildness and gentleness with his authority, that by degrees he subdues their pride and makes them willing to sit at his feet to hear his words. This is the humble posture of all his true disciples. They receive him by faith for their teacher, convinced that without him they can learn nothing which belongs to their peace, and having been for some time under his teaching, they grow more sensible of their want of it. He discovers to them more of their ignorance, and thereby brings them to a closer dependence upon him for wisdom. And that is the way they rise in his school. Whoever is the most humble and teachable, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. The abiding sense of his standing in need of the divine Prophet every moment makes him the highest scholar. And the Lord keeps him in this dependent state, waiting upon him for his continual instruction, in hearing and reading the word, and in prayer for the enlightening Spirit to make the word effectual. The great Prophet could teach without these means, but he has commanded us in the use of them to wait upon him: for in them he has promised to meet and bless his people, and for the fulfilling of this promise they wait. Christ's presence they look

for in the use of all means, and they find it. He teaches them how liable they are to err, how little they know, how soon they forget, and thus they grow in a dependence upon, and in love to their divine Teacher. And as all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him, and they can know at present but in part, they therefore will be waiting upon him for more, still more knowledge, and he answers his character, he teaches them wisdom. He shews them dangers, discovers to them the devices of Satan, guards them against the errors and heresies of the day, makes manifest the snares of the world, and in all respects fulfils to them the offices of an infallible prophet: for he keeps them from resting upon any false foundation, and enables them to build all their hopes of acceptance with God upon the atonement made by the high

PRIEST of our profession Christ Jesus. This is his chief office. He is our Prophet to teach us our guilty helpless state, and to bring us to rely upon him to save us from it, by being our Priest. All we have sinned, and have incurred the pains and penalties due to sin. We are all justly liable to the sufferings and death, to the curse and to the separation from God, threatened in his law to trangressors, and we have no means in our own power to escape them. How full then of grace and love was the heart of our blessed Immanuel, that he would vouchsafe to be a priest to offer gifts and sacrifices for sin? His gifts were infinitely precious—he gave himself for us, the gift of his eternal God-head, the gift of his immaculate manhood, body and soul, in which he obeyed perfectly, and so magnified the law, that it may be eternally honourable in admitting those, who have sinned, into heaven—the gift of his prevailing prayer for all that shall believe in him to the end of the world —and the gift of his body and soul to be once offered for sin, in the place and in the stead of sinners, as it is written, "He suffered once for sins the just for the "unjust that he might bring us unto God—He died "for our sins according to the scriptures—He was made

" a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse " of the law, and that we who sometimes were afar off " might be made nigh by his blood, and might through " him have access by one Spirit unto the Father." In these most precious gifts, in this everlasting meritorious Sacrifice consists the office of our divine priest; and upon him the believer rests. He is enabled upon this foundation to build all his hopes of acceptance. The great atonement made by Jesus' obedience unto death is all his salvation, and all his desire—all his salvation: for he looks no where else, but to Jesus and him crucified: he depends upon nothing else to save him from suffering and death, from the curse of the law, and from being eternally separated from God. And this is all his desire—to get a closer acquaintance, and more intimate communion with the crucified Jesus. This is his one study and delight—I have determined, says he, to know nothing but Jesus, by whom I have now received the atonement. God forbid that I should glory, except in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ. I would look upon all other things as dross and dung, compared to the excellency of the knowledge of that one offering, by which he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. In this his priestly office, bleeding and dying for me, he is beyond description, beyond conception, full of grace and truth; and daily he becomes more lovely in mine eyes. As I discover more of the exceeding sinfulness of my heart and life, my meritorious Priest grows more dear to me: I rest more safely on his atonement, satisfied of its infinite sufficiency to bring me near to God. And finding my faith and hopes established in it, and through it a free access to the Father, Jesus the sacrificed Lamb of God becomes day-by day more precious to my heart. His blood and righteousness are the continual rejoicing of my soul. Oh! how happy am I in this my royal Priest: for now even now have I redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins—I am safe from the destroying angel under the blood of sprinkling, and I have also boldness

to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Daily do I experience more of the riches of his grace, comforting, strengthening, and sanctifying me through faith in his most precious blood. Through this he saves me from hell, through this he bestows upon me heaven, and for this shall be my song of everlasting praise: Unto him who hath thus exceedingly loved me, and hath washed me from my sins in his own blood, and hath made me, the vilest of sinners, a king and a priest (amazing grace) unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

These are the breathings of the believing soul, now become well-grounded upon the atonement, and living upon the priestly office of the Lord Jesus Christ, for peace and joy, and expecting to be established in them continually by his power, which makes another of his offices necessary: for some corruption or enemy, temptation or trouble, will be always trying to draw the eye of faith from looking unto Jesus the High Priest of our profession: and such is the believer's helplessness, that he could not be fixed a moment, was not Jesus a priest upon his throne, almighty to make all his enemies his footstool, and to rule in and over his people as their

KING. In this relation he exceedingly endears himself to them: for they are in themselves weak and helpless. They are without strength to resist the least temptation, or to overcome the weakest enemy. They cannot of themselves subdue one corruption, or get the victory over a single lust. Neither can they perform one act of spiritual life. They cannot make nor keep themselves alive to God by any power of their own: for without Christ they can do nothing. Most mercifully then is his kingly office suited to their weakness. He is the great king over all the earth, as God; but he has a peculiar rule in and over believers as God-man, the Head of the body the church; to which he is connected by as close and near a bond, as the members of the body are with the head. He is the first in dignity, as the head is, and in all things has the pre-eminence;

and what the natural head is to its members, the same he is to the members of his spiritual body: for he is the Head, from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. And for the ministering of proper nourishment and influence to his members, he has all power in heaven and earth in his hand. He is the Lord God omnipotent, whose kingdom ruleth over all. It is not an outward thing, like the kingdoms of the world; but, says he, the kingdom of God is within you. He sets it up within, in the hearts of his people, and there he sways the sceptre of his grace, subduing all the evils within, and conquering all the enemies without, by his almighty arm. He takes them and theirs under his royal protection, and manages all their matters for them, until he bring them by his power unto eternal salvation. The power is his; but by faith, it becomes theirs. When they find themselves helpless and without strength, then they look up to him to make them strong in the Lord, and by faith rest upon his promised strength, and thereby receive whatever degree of it is needful at that time. Thus they live by faith upon their almighty king, and they glorify him by trusting in him for strength. By daily experience they become more sensible of their weakness, and learn to live more out of themselves upon him. They find the safety, the comfort of this. They see it is far better for them to be dependent upon Christ, that his power may rest upon them, than that they should be strong in themselves: and therefore they rejoice, they take pleasure in their own weakness, because it illustrates and magnifies the power of Christ, who does all for them, and in them.

Hear one of these happy believers thus describing his case: I was caught up, says he, into the third heavens, into paradise, and I heard there unspeakable words, which it is not possible for a man to utter; and lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the Revelations, there was given to me a thorn

in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure; for this thing I besought the Lord thrice that he would take it away from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee—My grace is sufficient to sanctify this cross; and to support thee under it; it will be for my glory and for thy good it should be continued: because my strength is made perfect in weakness—The weaker thou art, the more will thy strength be magnified in bearing thee up, until faith and patience have their perfect work. This divine answer from my Lord and king satisfied me, and I have for fourteen years had sweet experience of the truth of it. I am a witness to the all-sufficiency of Jesus' grace; but never have I found so much of it, as when I have been the most helpless in myself; and therefore most gladly will I glory in my infirmities and weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me, that his power may be continually glorified by my continually depending upon him for it; and that I may have fresh evidence of Christ's power working mightily in me. Since the Lord is thus become my strength, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake, in whatever I suffer for him and his cause: for when I am weak then am I strong—weak in myself, strong in the Lord; stronger in him the more sensible I am of my own weakness, and then strongest of all, when finding I can do nothing, I live by faith upon him to do all for me. In this state of weakness and dependence I glory, I take perfect pleasure in it; because it honours the kingly office of my Lord Christ, and makes it plain to myself and others, that he keeps me every moment by his mighty power: for since I can do nothing, the excellency of the power which does all in me and by me, appears evidently to be of God, and not of man.

Reader, is not this an happy case? Is not that man blessed whose strength is in the Lord, and who can say in faith, Surely in the Lord have I strength? And what hinders thee from being as strong in the Lord as

Paul was? Thou hast the same promises, the same God and Saviour to fulfil them; and, for thy greater encouragement to live upon him by faith, for the fulfilling of them to thee, he has another office, in which he condescends to be thy

ADVOCATE, freely to take thy cause in hand, and to see it carried in the court of heaven. In this character he would represent himself, as having undertaken to answer all charges against thee from whatever quarter they come, and to obtain for thee every blessing promised in his word, and for which thou appliest to him by faith in the time of need. In this amiable light he would have thee to consider him as thy daysman, to whom being thy Saviour and thy Friend, thou mayest safely refer thy cause, as the Mediator between God and man, who will transact all thy matters for thee with the Father, and as thy Intercessor, who appears in the presence of God for thee, that every blessing of his salvation may be thine. Under these names the scripture describes the advocateship of the Lord Christ, which office he sustains for thy sake, to encourage thee to come with boldness to the throne of his grace. Thou hast a friend there, who is bound by his word, and also by his office, to see that thou want no manner of thing which is good; and although all things seem to make against thee, and thou canst find no human means of obtaining the promised good, which thou wantest, then look up to the Lord Jesus. Thou wilt glorify him at such a time, if thou canst trust in his intercession, and if the workings of thy faith be such as these—

Although I am less than the least of God's mercies, a vile sinner, and to this moment an unprofitable servant, deserving for my very best works and duties to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord; yet glory be to his infinite grace, I have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitation for my sins. All the blessings which he has promised to give his dear people, as their Saviour, their Prophet, Priest and King,

he is my Advocate with the Father to obtain for me. —A righteous Advocate, who asks nothing but what he has a right to, and who never asks in vain. It hath pleased the Father, that all fulness should dwell in the Head of the body, the church, and it pleaseth him that the members should, from the fulness of their Head, receive abundantly all the influence they want; for the Father himself loveth them, and out of his infinite love gave his Son to be their head, that he might fill all in all of them. What then may not I expect from such an Advocate with such a Father? Already have I received so much that I know Jesus appears in the presence of God for me. I can trust my cause in his hands. He has taught me to leave all my matters to his management, and I desire more simply to resign them up to him. I find every thing goes on well which is left to his direction, and nothing miscarries but what I undertake without him. Oh for more faith! The Lord increase it, that my precious Advocate may be more glorified by my trusting him more, and that he may have all the honour of conducting my affairs, spiritual and temporal, in earth and heaven, in time and in eternity: Even so be it Lord Jesus.

After the believer has been taught thus to trust the Lord Christ, and to expect that grace which in his several offices he is engaged to give, then his conversation will be well ordered: and as he daily grows in faith and dependence upon Christ, he will walk more in the comfort of the Holy Ghost: his outward as well as inward matters, will come under the influence of grace, and will be left to the direction and government of the Lord Jesus, which is another excellency of the life of faith, and which renders it infinitely preferable to any other way of living.

The state of the case is this: Christ has all power in heaven and earth given unto him. As God-man he has a mediatorial kingdom, which ruleth over all created beings and things; for they subsist by the word of his power, and are upheld by his providence, so that what-

ever, in his infinite love and wisdom, he sees best for his people, he is almighty to bestow it on them. They can want no promised good, nor suffer any outward evil; but he is able to give the one, and to deliver from the other. Their wants are many, their sufferings great. Sin has brought disorder upon the whole creation. The outward state of man in the world is full of misery, not only following him, but also in him, in his very frame and constitution.—Pain, sickness, mortality in his body, emptiness in his enjoyments, disappointments, losses, worldly cares, something or other in body or estate troubling him; for man is born to trouble. What manner of love then is this, that God our Saviour would take these things under his government, and manage them for the good of his people, whom he would have to be happy in him in this world, as well as in the next. He has given them many great and precious promises relating to the life that now is, and he is faithful who hath promised to supply their earthly wants, to sanctify their sufferings, and to make all things work together under him for their good. He has kindly undertaken their temporal, as well as their spiritual concerns; for nothing was left out of the covenant of grace. It was ordered in ALL things. The outward state and condition of believers, their poverty or riches, health or sickness, trials of every kind, how great they should be, how long they should continue, are all appointed and unalterably fixed; nothing left for chance to do. When the Lord God determined to bring many sons unto glory through Christ Jesus, the means by which he intended to bring them unto that end, were in his purpose, as well as the end itself: therefore all things were ordered and made sure, even to the very hairs of their head; for they are all numbered. What a continual source of comfort is this to believers! Their present happiness is provided for as well as their eternal, in the covenant of grace. God is become their God, has made himself known to them in this covenant-relation, and has thereby bound himself to give whatever he sees will

be the best for them. But because he knoweth their frame, and how apt they are, under hard and long trials of faith, to be discouraged, he has therefore made them many sweet temporal promises for their support. Lest they should be weary and faint in their minds, he has engaged to deliver them from all evil, "Many "are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord de- "livereth them out of them all," Psal. xxxiv. 19. He delivers two ways, either by entirely removing the affliction, or by changing its nature; for he takes the curse out of it, and turns it into a real blessing, he makes it the means of increasing faith and patience, sweetens it with a sense of his presence, and demonstrates that it comes from love, by its increasing love to him in the heart of the righteous. This is the best deliverance, as one of the greatest sufferers for Christ witnesses, who, upon the mention of his afflictions, declares: "Out of them all the Lord delivered me," by saving me from the evil that was in them, and by making them yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

The Lord has also engaged to bestow upon believers all good: "They that seek the Lord shall not want "any good thing," Psal. xxxiv. 10. Their loving Shepherd will see that they lack nothing, no good thing will he with-hold from them. To the same purpose are the promises in the New-Testament, Mat. vi. 33. Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things, food and raiment, and all necessaries, shall be added unto you. I your God and Saviour give you my word for it; trust me, and you shall never want. With confidence, did he believe it, who said to the Philippians, iv. 19. "My God shall "supply ALL your need, according to his riches in glory "by Christ Jesus." What a powerful motive is here for the strengthening of our faith, that be our wants ever so many, ever so great, our God has engaged to supply them all! We may boldly then cast all our care upon him, since he careth for us, and may rest assured of his managing our whole outward estate, infinitely

better than we could for ourselves. What trouble, what burdens shall we be hereby eased of! What peace of mind shall we enjoy, when we can give up all our temporal concerns into the Lord's hands, and by faith see them all conducted for our good, by his infinite wisdom and almighty love! Blessed surely is the man who thus putteth his trust in the Lord his God. He is delivered from the anxious care of getting, and from the fear of losing what he has got: he is easy about the present, the future he leaves to the Lord: his conversation is without covetousness, and he is content with such things as he has, and thereby he escapes thousands of the common troubles of life. In this sweet peace he enjoys his soul, because the Lord has said to him—"I will never leave thee nor forsake "thee," in any state, in any want, or in any distress —I will be ever with thee to turn all things, seem they ever so afflicting, into real blessings. Trusting to this word, which cannot be broken, he may boldy say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me: let the world persecute me, my trade fail, poverty pinch me, sickness pain me, friends leave me, and all outward comforts forsake me, nevertheless I am a happy man. The Lord Christ is my portion, my all-sufficient-portion still, and these things, being of his appointment, are for the best. I find them so, glory be to him. He makes them the means of weaning me from the world, deadening the old man of sin, bringing me to a more intimate acquaintance with himself, and to a greater experience of his goodness to my soul; whereby he enables me to trust all things for time and for eternity in his hands, who hath said unto me, and faithful is he that hath spoken, who also will do it, "I "will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

But some may say, Are there any persons who lives thus above the world, freed from its cares and fears, and troubles? Yes, thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift. He has promised to make all things to work together for good to them that love him, and he has

had witnesses in every age of his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises. Read that little book of martyrs, Hebrews xi. and you will see how happy they were in God, not only in prosperity, but also when all the world was against them. Great were the triumphs of their faith. They chose to suffer affliction rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; they esteemed the reproach of Christ, and set more value upon it than upon riches and honours. And we have a great cloud of witnesses in the New-Testament, who rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ, who blessed their revilers, prayed for their persecutors, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods. Hear one of them speaking the sentiments of the rest: "I account all things but "loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ "Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss "of all things, and I do account them but dung, that "I may win Christ." Still there are some among us of Paul's mind. The Lord hath not left himself without witness. We have a few names, (may the Lord daily add to their number) who can trust all their temporal affairs in the hands of Christ, and who find the happiness of having them in his management. He does all things well for them: what would make them unhappy he takes upon himself—"cast thy burden "on the Lord," says he, "and he shall sustain thee," and he does sustain the weight of it, and thereby frees them from anxious care, and gives them sweet content. They have enough, let them have ever so little of outward things, because they have got the Pearl of great price. Christ is theirs, and the Spirit of Christ enables them to make up all their happiness in him, and not in the things which perish in the using. Christ, with bread and water, is worth ten thousand worlds. Christ, with pain is better than the highest pleasures of sin. Christ, with all outward sufferings, is matter of present, and and of eternal joy. Surely these are the only happy people living. Reader, art thou not one of them? Art

thou not a partaker of their happiness? If thou art a believer, it is thy privilege; thy title to it is good, and thou enterest into possession by faith, and if it be so weak that thou art not so happy as they are, thou shouldest take shame to thyself for dishonouring God thy Saviour, for robbing him of his glory before men, and for injuring thine own soul, by not committing all thy outward matters unto his guidance. What could he do more, than he has done, to encourage thee to leave them to him, that he might manage them for thee? He has given thee argument upon argument, promises in abundance, bonds which cannot be broken, immutable things, in which it is impossible that God should lie to convince thee that thou mayest safely trust in him for all temporal things which he knows will be for thy good. O pray then for more faith. Beg of the Lord to enable thee to walk more by faith, and less by sense, that thou mayest commit thy way entirely unto him, and he may direct all thy paths. The more thou trustest in him, the happier he will make thee. Therefore daily intreat him to deliver thee from taking any anxious thought for thy life, what thou shalt eat, or what thou shalt drink; or yet for thy body what thou shalt put on. Since he knoweth thou hast need of all those things, and has sent thee to the fowls of the air, and to the grass of the field, to see what a rich provision he makes for them; art thou not much better than they? Oh! pray still for the increase of faith, that all thy worldly matters being resigned, and given up into the hand of the Lord thy God, thou mayest be eased of many weights and burdens, and mayest run with more patience and joy the race that is set before thee.

As these fathers in Christ learn by daily experience, to live more upon him for the bread that perisheth, so do they for the bread that endureth unto everlasting life. They attain to a fixed settled dependence upon Christ for the conducting of all things belonging to their state of grace, to their comfortable walk in it, and to their finishing their course happily. They grow in

the knowledge of those blessed truths, are more grounded and better established in them, and these being received and enjoyed by faith, do manifest the excellency of living by it above any other state, except that of glory.

First, they are pardoned and accepted in the Beloved—In him partakers of every covenant-mercy; for he was made of God unto them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. His whole salvation is theirs. And this is their state of grace, into which he has brought them, and by faith put them into the present enjoyment of it.

This was largely treated of before, but cannot be too much insisted upon, both because there is a growth in the knowledge of the covenant, and clearer evidence daily to be had of the believer's interest in it, and also because the love and wisdom and mercy in contriving, the power in executing, the grace in applying, the blessings of the covenant, are all infinite. The height and depth, the length and breadth of those divine perfections cannot be fully comprehended. They surpass knowledge; so that if a believer knows a great deal of the way of salvation; yet there is still more, far more to be known. So long as he lives he must be learning, waiting upon the divine Prophet for his inward teaching, and he will become more dependent upon him, the more he learns: for the wiser he grows, the clearer views will he have of his having attained as yet but little wisdom, which makes him press forward. He believes that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are laid up in Christ, and he longs for more knowledge of his gracious undertakings, of his adorable person, and of his full and free salvation. He follows on to know the Lord. He advances from one degree to another, from faith to faith, and is not satisfied with any discovery until that which is in part be done away, and he shall know even as also he is known.

The believer, being thus satisfied that he is in a safe state, looks up to the Lord to keep him, and to enable

him to walk comfortably in it, which is another excellency of the life of faith. All things are well ordered in the covenant for every step he is to take: all treasured up in the fulness of Christ, and by faith received out of it. The believer has many enemies opposing him in his way heaven-wards; but in Christ he has strength sufficient to conquer them all, and does conquer them. His worst enemy, that gives him most uneasiness, is indwelling sin, which is never at rest like the troubled sea, always casting up some of its filthy motions and corruptions; so that when he is in prayer, it is ever trying to amuse and distract the mind with a thousand vain and idle thoughts, to weaken faith by its carnal reasonings and doubts, or when he is in any holy duty, it is ever present with him to hinder him from doing it so perfectly as he would. Over this enemy there is no victory but by faith. The old man of sin defies all strength, except that which is almighty, and therefore this the Lord has promised; and these believers had experience of his faithfulness, whose iniquities he had pardoned, and who declared, *Micah* vii. 19. "He will "subdue our iniquities." He will do it: He is engaged by promise, by office, it is his glory to save his people from the dominion of their sins. On him therefore they depend for continual victory, and according to their faith so it is done unto them. While they fight against sin, relying on the strength of their almighty King, they always conquer. His arm subdues the strongest lust: but if they attack the weakest without him, they are infallibly conquered. And this has so often happened to those fathers that know him that is from the beginning, that now they never dare go down to battle, but with their eyes upon the Lord. He has taught them to depend wholly upon him for the crucifying of the old man of sin day by day, and in the power of his might, armies of lusts are made to flee before them. The captain of their salvation encourages them to fight on, not only by subduing sin in them, but also by making this the earnest of their having in

him an absolute mortification of sin. By faith they see it, and his victorious grace will never leave them until he put them into full possession of it. Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ their Lord, ere long they shall have perfect and everlasting victory over the whole body and being of sin. And

As the old man is thus crucified, so is the new man quickened by the power of Jesus, received by faith, according to what is written, "The just shall live by his "faith." The justified person by his union with Christ is a partaker of the grace of life, and in virtue of this union he lives upon Christ as a member does in the body, and thereby he has communion with the Father, by the bond of the Spirit; and this spiritual life is begun and carried on by faith; it is a life of faith, not as if faith quickened a dead sinner; for Christ is our life. But the sense and comfort, and strength of that life which Christ gives, are received by faith, and these are according as faith is. If faith be weak, so are they. As it grows, so do they. Which discovers to us another wonderful excellency of the life of faith, since by it we now partake of a spiritual and eternal life: "For "he that believeth hath everlasting life," hath it now, is already passed from death unto life, and he looks up to the Lord and Giver of it for every thing needful, and expects it out of his fulness. Hear one of these happy believers thus relating his case. I am dead to the law, says he, yet alive to God; I am crucified with Christ, and am a partaker of the merit and power of his cross, and by faith I have in him an absolute crucifixion of sin; and although the old man is thus crucified, yet the new man liveth: nevertheless I live, yet not I—I live a spiritual life, yet not I as a natural man, I did not quicken myself; I cannot keep myself alive, Christ liveth in me, he is the Author of my life, and on him I depend for the continuance of it in time and in eternity: for the life which I now live in the flesh, while I am in this body of sin and death, I live by the faith of the Son of God; he is the Author, he is the

Object of that faith, by which I have received life from him: by an act of sovereign grace he quickened me from a death in trespasses and sins, and united me as a living member into his mystical body, and I am kept alive through his living, acting, and working in me by his Spirit; he dwelleth in my heart by faith, and the more clearly I see this, the more do I love and enjoy the Prince of life, my precious, above all expression, infinitely, eternally precious Jesus, who loved me and gave himself for me, that by his death I might be dead to sin, and by his resurrection might live to and with God for ever and ever. Thanks and praise be to thee without ceasing, thou dear Lamb of God, for thy love to me the chief of sinners. Let all thy people say, *Amen.*

This is the happy case of those believers, who are like the blessed Paul, strong in the Lord Christ. By his death they are dead to sin, and because he liveth they are alive to God: for they who are joined to the Lord are one spirit. And as their faith increases, they have more spiritual fellowship with Christ in his death and resurrection, not only in the merit, but also in the efficacy of both. They grow more dependent upon the Lord's strength, and he daily mortifies in them the old man of sin, and as he grows weaker their other enemies have less power over them. By their lusts Satan tempts them, the more these are mortified, the weaker will be his temptations. By their lusts, by the lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, the world tempts them, as these are subdued, they will be more crucified to the world. Christ living, dwelling, and reigning in them by faith, will day by day weaken the strength of sin and Satan, and the world; and by the power of his death and resurrection he will be conforming them more to his own image and likeness. He will by faith enable them to be growing up into him in all things, as long as they live. They will be going on from strength to strength, till sin and death be swallowed up in victory.

Until that happy time come he has appointed certain means, in the use of which they are to wait for the continual receiving of grace from him to deaden the old man, and for the growth of the new. And this grace they receive, not merely because they use the means, but because they use them in faith, expecting his presence in, and blessing upon them. Believers set the Lord always before them, and look through the means at him: for without him they are good for nothing; but when observed, according to his mind and will, as acts of trust in his promise, and of dependence upon his faithfulness, then they answer the end for which they were instituted and become the means of spiritual communion with him. And thus legal duties become christian privileges. One of these means is attendance upon public worship, the ground and reason for which is Christ's promise—"Where two or three are gather-"ed together in my name, there am I in the midst "of them."—Two or three believers make a church, when they are gathered together in the name of Christ's divinity. By faith they expect the fulfilling of his promise, and his presence in the midst of them; and they are then most spiritual worshippers, when they are looking most unto Jesus, and enjoying communion with him. What are their prayers but acts of faith and dependence? "Whatever ye shall ask, says Christ, "in my name, believing ye shall receive." Which words shew us that prayer is nothing worth, unless it be presented in Christ's name, and in faith relying on Christ's promise to hear and answer. The object of prayer is the Godhead in three persons. The address to each is in their covenant-offices, and the petitions to each should be according as they stand related to sinners in those offices, and the communion with the divine persons is thus expressed—"Through Christ Jesus "we have an access by one Spirit unto the Father;" and whatever we ask believing we receive. What is believers hearing the word? Is it not a continual dependence upon their divine Teacher to make his word

spirit and life unto their souls? They expect his presence to enable them to mix faith with what they hear, and then they grow thereby. What is their keeping the Lord's day? Is it not to express their belief of his being risen, and entered into his rest, and of their having, by believing, entered into rest also, and therefore they wait upon Christ in the ordinances to keep them, until he bring them to his eternal sabbath, to that rest which remaineth for the people of God. What is their attendance upon the Lord's supper? Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ, and the communion of the body of Christ, a real partaking by faith of his broken body, and of his precious blood shedding, and of all the benefits of his passion? In these and all other ways of God's appointment, they expect Christ's presence, and therefore they go to them with gladness of heart to meet him. He is the dear Object of their love, and he grows more lovely by every day's experience. They taste and see more how gracious he is, and therefore to converse with him in prayer, and to be in his company in the ordinances, becomes more sweet and delightful to them. Oh! what happy moments do they therein spend! All the great, rich, and pleasant things in the world are less than nothing compared to this joy. Communion with Christ is heaven begun; and by faith they enjoy it, and nothing can rob them of it but sin; which makes them careful in their life and conversation to please their gracious Lord. They depend upon him to teach them his will, and to give them strength to perform it, that they may walk before him in all well-pleasing. Whatever is opposite to his will they dread, because it would deprive them of their greatest blessing, even communion with their best and bosom Friend. Sin viewed in this light, is blacker and viler than all the devils in hell. The love of Christ shews sin in its exceeding sinfulness, and faith working by love to Christ gains daily victory over it. He who has the love of Christ in his heart will be thereby sweetly constrained to fight against, and powerfully enabled to

conquer sin, so that it cannot separate him from his beloved Saviour, nay, it shall make him live in closer and nearer connexion. The motions of sin within, and temptations without, to which he is continually liable, will shew him the necessity of living in a settled dependence upon the grace and strength of the Captain of his salvation, who will lead him on conquering and to conquer, until he make him at last more than conqueror.

The same faith, working by love, has gained the hearts and affections of believers over to the interest of holiness, and the commandments now cease to be grievous. Love to Christ, who is perfect righteousness and holiness, cannot consist with the hatred of either; nay, they are renewed after his image in both, and renewed in knowledge, that they might know his precious image, and renewed in heart, that they might love it; therefore being thus created anew in Christ Jesus, they will certainly, in the inner-man, delight in righteousness and true holiness. He has shed his love abroad in their hearts, has won them to himself, and now nothing is dearer to them than that everlasting righteousness by which he justifies them, and that true holiness, of which they are become partakers in him, which they evidence by a holy walk, and in which he will present them holy and unblameable and unrebukeable before the Father. Thus he has perfectly secured the interest of holiness and the glory of the most holy God; for they are his workmanship, created unto good works, to love them, to do them, to walk in them as the way to the kingdom, and they live by faith upon Christ's strength for will and power to do them, and upon his intercession for the acceptance of them, laying them all upon the golden altar that sanctifieth the gifts. Thus their whole dependence is upon Christ. He is all, and in all of their Christian walk. To him they look for every thing needful, to enable them to glorify God in their lives, and to shew forth the virtues of him that hath called them; on his grace they rely, that their conversation may be as becometh the gospel of Christ, and that

they may adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things; and they find in him a sufficiency of grace, yea, they can do all things, and suffer all things through Christ strengthening them. Whatever difficulties they meet with in the way of duty, leaning upon their Beloved, he carries them through all—Whatever temptations, I will be with thee, says he, in the hour of temptation, look unto me, and thou shalt be saved —Whatever enemies, Fear them not, says he, for I am with thee, be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness— Whatever sorrows, Your sorrows, says he, shall be turned into joy, and your joy no man taketh from you— Whatever sickness, I will strengthen thee upon the bed of languishing, and I will make all thy bed in thy sickness—Whatever poverty, I will be a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress—Whatever persecution, Blessed are ye, says he, who are persecuted for righteousness sake, I pronounce you, I will make you, blessed. Thus Christ is with them, and none of the evils or miseries of life can separate them from him. He keeps them safe, and carries them through all their trials by his mighty power, and they, trusting in him, find that he makes all things work together for their good. What a blessed life is this! Surely there is none like it: for the life of faith is glory begun. The privileges, the happiness of it, are greater than can be described. The strongest believers upon earth may daily know more, and may experience far more of the comfort of walking by faith, because as they grow more established in it, they will be receiving more power over sin, and will walk nearer to God. Having but one object to look unto and to live upon for all things: here they will be quietly settled. What can so effectually keep them from being tossed to and fro, as to have all fulness treasured up for their use in Christ, and to be brought to a fixed dependence upon his fulness, and to live upon it for all things belonging to life

and godliness? Hereby sweet peace will be established within, and there will be a regular walk in the outward conversation. The whole man will experience what the Lord has promised to his redeemed people. "I "will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters, in a "straight way, wherein they shall not stumble." He leads them by his Spirit, and causes them to walk by the rivers of waters, where there are abundant streams of grace continually flowing, and he guides them in a straight way, that they shall not stumble or err therein; but shall be kept happily to the end of their course, and shall finish it to their everlasting joy. And

This is another inestimable privilege of believers. Christ has engaged to keep them unto the end; and having begun a good work in them, he has promised never to leave it until it be finished. What a strengthening is this to their faith, and what a glory does it put upon the whole life of faith, that it is a life which cannot perish? Believers have in them the immortal seed of eternal life. This is the crown of all: for how will this bear them up under crosses, support them in troubles, carry them on in their warfare against the flesh, the devil, and the world, and make them defy all dangers, yea death itself, since they are assured, from the mouth of God their Saviour, that none shall pluck them out of his hands. They do not trust themselves, or have any dependence upon grace received, but they rely upon the faithfulness and power of Jesus, who has given them abundant evidence that he will water them with his grace every moment, and hold them up by his strength, and they shall be safe. How confident were believers of this in the Old Testament? One of them who had attained this assurance of faith, says, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the "days of my life;" and he, with many others who had obtained like precious faith with him declare,—"This "is our God for ever, he will be our guide even unto "death;" They were sure he would be their God, and would follow them with mercy, and guide them, and do

them good in life and death. To the same purpose our Lord has promised believers, "My sheep hear my "voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I "give unto them eternal life, and they shall never "perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." How confidently did he trust in Christ for the fulfilling of this blessed promise, who said, "I am fully per- "suaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor "principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor "things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other "creature shall be able to separate us from the love of "God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Oh! sweet words of comfort: how happy was Paul in this assurance of faith? It is thy privilege, believer, as well as his. Thou hast the same promises that he had, the same God to fulfil them, and thy faith ought to be growing until thou be assured that no creature, not all the powers on earth, nor the gates of hell, can separate thee from Christ. They may as soon get into heaven, and cut off Christ's right hand, which is impossible, as to cut off one of the members of Christ's mystical body

If thou art ready to say, I see clearly how I should glorify my dear Lord, and how happy I should be, if my faith was but like Paul's in this point, but I am so weak and liable to fall, and mine enemies so numerous and mighty, that I sometimes fear I shall never be able to hold out unto the end. Because thou art such, therefore the Lord has given thee his promise, that he will hold thee up, and thou shalt be safe. And this promise is part of the covenant, which is ordered in all things, and sure. Look at that, and not at thyself. Consider the Messenger of the covenant, in whom it is all ordered, and by whom it is sure. When thy unfaithfulness would discourage thee, think of his faithfulness. Let thy weakness remind thee of his strength. If indeed he leave thee a single moment thou wilt fall: but he has promised, I will *never* leave thee. If the number and strength of thine enemies make thee fear least thou shouldest one day perish by the hand of Saul, he says

to thee, thou shalt be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. But if thou art tempted to doubt, finding thy revolting heart apt to turn from the Lord, "I will put my fear, says he, into thy heart, "that thou shalt not depart from me." Observe, it is his faithfulness and power, and not thine, which is to keep thee, and has covenanted to do it, and he has all power in heaven and earth, and he has given thee promise upon promise for the establishment of thy faith, that thou mightest be certain he will love thee, and keep thee unto the end. And when he has brought thee to a certainty of it, then thy comfort will be full. Christ will be magnified in thee, now he has made thee one of those fathers, who have known him that is from the beginning. He has taught thee so to know him, as to trust him for all things and in all times. This is his crown and glory. He has enthroned himself in thy heart, as thy perfect Saviour, and his kingdom is within thee, even righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Now thy calling and thy election is sure. Thou knowest that he is faithful who has promised to keep thee, who also will do it. And having this assurance of faith, attended with the rejoicing of hope, and being sealed by the blessed Spirit to the day of redemption, surely thou art an happy man, thrice happy, whom the Lord has thus highly favoured. How infinitely indebted art thou to his grace! Oh! what thanks and praises dost thou owe, more than thou canst ever pay, for what he has already done for thee! And yet this is only the dawning of the perfect day. His present favours are only earnests and pledges of what he will hereafter give thee. Therefore still trust in him, and he will enlighten thee more by his Word and Spirit, he will enliven, strengthen, and establish thee more. Thy faith will daily rest more assuredly upon him, the joy of thy hope will increase, thy love will yet more abound. He will guide thee by his counsel in an even course, and will receive thee into glory.

Thus have I treated, as I was able, of the safety and

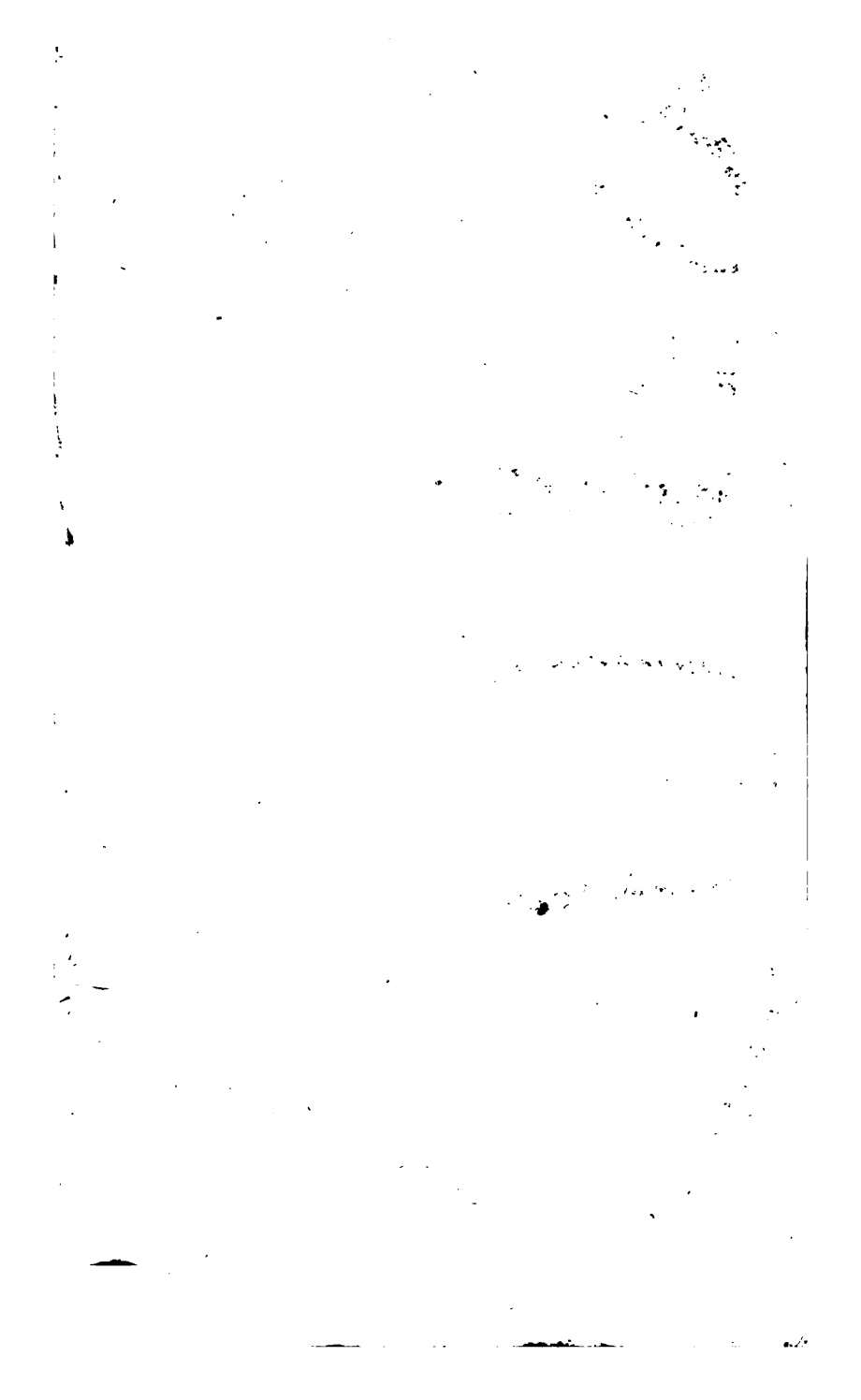
happiness of living by faith upon the Son of God, and have described the common hinderances which stop its growth, and the victory over them, which the Lord gives his people. I have been forced to be very short, and could only throw out some hints upon this copious subject. May the good Lord pardon what is amiss, and bliss abundantly what is according to his mind and will. If thou hast followed me, reader, in thy experience, and art indeed a happy believer, living upon thy blessed Jesus, for his promised heaven; and for all things promised to thee in the way thither, think what a debt thou owest him! how dear and precious should he be to thy heart! He has saved thee from all evil, he will bless thee with all good. As surely as thou hast the earnest, thou shalt have the purchased possession. Oh! what a Saviour is this! he has already bestowed upon thee the exceeding riches of his grace, but how great will be the riches of the glory, which he will give thee? Thou wilt soon see him as he is, and then thou shalt be like him. No tongue can tell how great that glory will be, not all the tongues in heaven, after the number of the elect shall be perfected, no not after they have enjoyed it for millions of ages: never, never will they be able to shew forth all his praise for making them like himself. Surely then, while thou art waiting for this glory, which shall be revealed, thou wilt be going on from faith to faith, that thy beloved Saviour may become more dear to thee; and that thou mayest have more close and intimate communion with him. Every day's experience should bring thee to love his appearing more. Having tasted how gracious he is, thou shouldest be longing for the marriage supper of the Lamb with fervent desire. And being now a Father in Christ, and strong in faith, thou wilt be often looking up to him and saying,

Make haste, my beloved, and take me to thyself—let me see thee face to face, and enjoy thee, thou dearest Jesus, whom my soul longeth after. It is good to live upon thee by faith, but to live with thee is best of all.

I have found one day in thy courts, conversing sweetly with thee, better than a thousand, but this has only whetted my appetite: the more communion I have with thee, I hunger and thirst still for more. My soul panteth for nearer, still nearer communion with thee. When shall I come to appear before the presence of God? O thou Light of my life, thou Joy of my heart, thou knowest how I wish for the end of my faith, when I shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but with open face behold the glory of my Lord. Thou hast so endeared thyself to me, thou precious Immanuel, by ten thousand thousand kindnesses, that I cannot be entirely satisfied, until I have the full vision and complete enjoyment of thyself. The day of our espousals has been a blessed time. O for the marriage of the Lamb, when I shall be presented as a chaste virgin to my heavenly Bridegroom! How can I but long earnestly for this full enjoyment of thy everlasting love! Come, Lord Jesus, let me see thee as thou art. Come and make me like unto thee. I do love thee, I am now happy in thy love, but not so as I hope to be. I am often interrupted here, and never love thee so much as I desire; but these blessed spirits standing now round thy throne are perfected in love. Oh! that I was once admitted to see as they do, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! Is not that the voice of my Beloved, which I hear answering, *Surely I come quickly!* Amen, say I, even so come, Lord Jesus. Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.

Art not these, believer, the breathings of thy soul? Since the time for them is short, may they grow warmer and more affectionate every day! Thou wilt wait but a little while before thou shalt see the King in his perfect beauty, and thou shalt be a blessed partaker of his eternal glory. And if he make these few lines any means of bringing thee to see more of his beauty at present, to live more upon his fulness, and to be happier in him; I hope thou and I shall, through his grace,

meet him soon, and give him to eternity the glory of this and of all his other mercies. To the Lord I commend thee, on whom thou hast believed. May he strengthen and establish thy faith daily, that it may grow exceedingly until he bring thee to the end of it, and admit thee into that innumerable company, who are ascribing blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, to Him that was slain, and hath redeemed them unto God by his blood: to whom, with the Father, and the eternal Spirit, three Persons in one Jehovah, be equal and everlasting praise. *Amen.*



A

TREATISE

UPON THE

WALK OF FAITH.

PART I.

Walk humbly with THY God.—Micah vi. 8.

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THE

PREFACE.

EVER since the *Life of Faith* was published, I have been attending to the doctrines therein advanced, and bringing them into experience. Their truth has appeared to me from the word of God, and has been confirmed by their being accompanied with the power of God. His divine influence attends his own doctrines to this day, and they have the promised effect upon the heart and life of the believer. They are mighty through God for all the purposes of salvation. What is said upon the subject in these volumes is chiefly in this experimental way. My design is to bring the great and leading points of our religion into use and practice, and to show how necessary the doctrines of grace are for the well governing of the Christian walk. Every thing needful is promised, and by faith is received, which can make it even and regular, holy and happy.

The apostle Paul complained of professors, who walked not according to the gospel. There has been occasion for the same complaint ever since; but never more than at present. Many walk at this day, who make some profession of Christ, and yet never attain to any stedfastness, but are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, and at last come to nothing.

Others pretending to be better settled attain to some form of godliness, but are without the life and

power of it; they appear to have some notions and opinions about the way of righteousness, but not being taught them of God, nor ever brought under the mighty influence of them, their walk is therefore very uneven and irregular, and generally in the end brings great scandal upon the name and cause of Christ.

We have also many at this day, who set out in the ways of religion, but never felt the ruin of the fall, nor the plague of their own hearts: these are commonly very confident and presumptuous; they make a shining profession, and go on with great parade, until they come to be tried, and then in the time of temptation they fall away.

There are others who are the real children of God, and yet do not walk as becometh their high rank and dignity. An even, holy, happy walk with their reconciled God and Father is their privilege, and there is grace sufficient promised in Jesus, and to be received by his Spirit, to enable them to live up to it, that they may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Yea, the apostles call upon them and encourage them to be going on and advancing in the right way—"Furthermore then we beseech you and "exhort you, brethren, by the Lord Jesus Christ, "that as ye have received of us, how ye ought to "walk and to please God, so ye would abound more "and more," 1 *Thess.* iv. 1. How few follow this evangelical exhortation! How very few attain and preserve in their consciences the sense of God's being perfectly at peace with them! It ought to rule there always and by all means: but for want of it, they afford continual occasion for a legal and unbelieving spirit to rob them of their peace, and thereby to distress them in their hearts. As guilt comes in love goes out. What weakens the cause must also weaken the effect. Love, with its fruits, must decrease in proportion as the believer withdraws his heart dependence from God. Then he begins to

walk uneven and uncomfortable, he grows cold and indifferent about spiritual things, he gets into darkness and discontent, he becomes quite unhappy in his frame, and unthankful in his affections: whatever was the cause of his falling into this decay, it began at the root. His faith was attacked, and gave way. As this yielded, the decay became general, and it was found true, "If ye will walk contrary "unto me, saith God, then will I also walk contrary "unto you."

Reader, if thou hast the faith of God's elect, thou knowest that these things are true. Thou findest it hard work to maintain peace with God: and if this be not maintained, if the foundation give way, the building will certainly totter. Look well then to the ground work. Is all safe there? Dost thou see the infinite glory of the Saviour's work, when he made peace by the blood of the cross, and does this silence guilt in thy conscience? Canst thou at all times draw nigh in love to a reconciled God? Does not the sense of thy failings and remaining corruptions keep thee at a distance from him, and render thy walk uncomfortable? especially when without are fightings, within are fears. If it be very difficult under such trials to preserve a sense of God's loving kindness, yet it should be remembered, there is a gracious provision made for the establishing of the soul so safely in Jesus Christ, that the peace of God may rule in it always, and by all means. Is it not necessary then to enquire, what this provision is? how it may be received? and how it may be made use of? For if by daily practice it may be experienced in its divine power, it will then have the same happy effect, which it had upon David, "I will run the way of thy commandments, "when thou hast set my heart at liberty." May thine heart, reader, and mine, enjoy more of the liberty of the children of God, and then we shall not only go forward, but also run fast, and may no-

thing stop us from pressing towards the mark, till we win the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

This has been my constant prayer during the writing of the following treatise. It was the fruit of reading, and meditating, and praying over those scriptures, which speak of the walk of faith. Such reflections, as used to occur to myself, I have put down; whether it was in searching my own heart, or in begging the blessing of God upon the text then under consideration. This seemed to me an easy method and very useful; because the doctrine would lead to practice, and frequent and heart-searching meditations would tend, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, to an increase of faith. There are some soliloquies, addressed to my own soul, and some exercises of devotion, in prayer and thanksgiving. I would have every believer to consider, whether it be not his privilege to join me in them, and to make my words his own. If he cannot follow me in this experience after the 5th chapter, I pray God to increase his faith, that this book and his experience may go hand in hand; and that he may attain to holy fellowship with God in all duties, and to rejoice in God at all times, yea under the cross itself, and to go on conquering and to conquer, till the good fight of faith be over, and he finish his course with joy.

A

TREATISE,

&c. &c.

CHAP. I.

Whoever walks with God, must be first acquainted with the way of peace.

It is the constant usage of scripture to represent spiritual things by material, and to speak of the faculties and actions of the soul by terms borrowed from those of the body. Walking is a bodily action, and consists in moving and going from one place to another, hence it is applied to the spiritual walk. The soul reconciled to God and at peace with him has an appointed way, in which it is to walk, in order to enjoy the grace promised to them who are in Christ Jesus. This is enjoyed by faith: and therefore the scripture calls the believer's going on in his walk with God from strength to strength, *The walk of faith*, "We walk by faith, "says the apostle, not by sight."

When man fell from God he lost his way and had neither will nor power to return. The Old Testament church makes this confession—"All we, like sheep, "have gone astray, we have turned EVERY ONE to his "own way," *Isa.* liii. 6.

The apostle Peter reminds believers of this—"Ye "are as sheep going astray, but are now returned to "the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls," 1 *Pet.* ii. 25. To which agree the words of his brother Paul—"There is none righteous, no not one, there is none

" that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after " God, they are ALL gone out of the way," *Rom.* iii. 10, 11, 12. The whole human race, says the oracles of truth, is gone astray, ALL of them are gone out of the way; they have left the way of God, and turned every one to his own way, they are unable, like a poor lost sheep, the most unable of all creatures, to return: yea, they are unwilling also; for they walk not after the spirit, but after the flesh—carnally minded, and in their carnal mind enmity itself against God and his ways.

It pleased God in the exceeding riches of his grace to reveal to those wanderers the way of salvation. He made it known to them upon the fall, and believers from that time forward saw it plainly, and went on in it comfortably. Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. are said to have walked with God in the very same way, afterwards marked out by the written word; which was a directory to the Jews, showing them how they should walk in the steps of the faith of their father Abraham. Age after age, God raised up the prophets to bring his people into the King's highway, and to put them upon praying, that they might be kept in it. By the mouth of his servant David, he gave them this promise.—" Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will " he teach sinners in the way—the meek will he guide " in judgment, and the meek will he teach his way." Encouraged by this warrant from the word of God, sinners feeling their wants were led to pray, " Show me " thy ways, O Lord, teach me thy paths, lead me in " thy truth and teach me," *Psalm* xxv. 4. It is written in the prophets—they shall be all taught of God—they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord. If any of his children lack wisdom, and ask it of God, he giveth to all his liberally, and upbraideth not. He brings them by his word and by his Holy Spirit to the knowledge of themselves, and to the knowledge of the true God.

Divine teaching is necessary to make men acquainted

with themselves. They know not their state, nor fear their danger, until the Holy Spirit according to his office proceed from the Father and the Son: then he convinces them of sin, of the exceeding sinfulness of it, of the guilt thereby incurred, and of the wrath deserved. He enlightens the understanding with a clear sight of those truths, and he fastens the conviction of them upon the conscience. Then they find, that they had been blind and ignorant, rebels in their wills, and apostates in their hearts from God. He makes them feel the corruption of their nature, and the error of their ways, in which, if they had gone on, they must inevitably have perished: for they were without will, and without power to return to God. When they were made to see it right, that they ought to return, and to repent, yet it was not their choice to come to him in the way of believing. They found they could not believe, unless it was given them from above. Faith is the gift of God. And cannot be received, but by the mighty operation of God. He must put forth his divine power, or else the convinced sinner will remain utterly helpless and hopeless shut up in unbelief.

Thus the Lord teaches all his children. He makes them acquainted with their fallen state, and sensible of their guilt and of their misery. He brings them to the right knowledge of the corruption of every faculty of soul and body, which are always inclining to evil, and incapable of doing any thing truly good. A corrupt tree can bring forth nothing but evil fruit. The judgment is enlightened to see this, the conscience is awakened to feel this, and thereby the convinced sinner is made willing to be taught the way of salvation. The Holy Spirit fulfils his office by teaching him the knowledge of God.

Our blessed Saviour declares, no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him; and this he does by the Holy Spirit of wisdom and revelation, who is therefore given to the

children of God, that they may know him and believe in him, as their reconciled Father in Christ Jesus. This saving knowledge is hid from the worldly wise and prudent, but is revealed unto the unlearned, whom the Holy Spirit has made simple and teachable people. To them he reveals the things of God. He makes them acquainted with the

Nature of the Godhead, which is one. There is one Jehovah, and there is none other. And also with the

Personality in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit. These three exist in the one Jehovah. They took those names, not to describe their manner of existing, but their manner of acting; not what they are in themselves, but how they stand related to us in the œconomy of redemption: for the Eternal Three entered into covenant-offices, and assume names, or characters, descriptive of their offices. Father is the title of that divine person, who, out of his infinite grace, gave an innumerable company of sinners to his Son, upon condition, that he would be maifested in the flesh, and would become their surety, to work out for them a righteousness in his life, and to make an atonement for them by his death, and then he would be his father, and their father. A co-equal and co-eternal Person accepted the condition, and covenanted to be made man, and to live and die for the many sons, whom he was to bring to glory; therefore he took the name of Son, Son of God, Son of Man, &c. Another co-equal and co-eternal Person covenanted to breathe life into them, to be to them the Spirit, or breath of life, that they might be regenerate from a death in trespasses and sins, and be made the children of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, therefore he is called throughout the scriptures *the Spirit*, or the breath of life. He makes them acquainted with the covenant as he has promised. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant," *Psalm*

xxv. 14. He will open to them the nature and uncertainty of all covenant engagements for the establishment and growth of their faith. *The covenant was ordered in all things and sure;* it was ORDERED by the counsel and purpose of the Eternal Three, concerning the heirs of promise, whose salvation was settled by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, his counsel, his oath. His counsel the result of his infinite wisdom, confirmed by that sacred oath which cannot possibly be broken. All his perfections stand engaged to see the sovereign decree, thus solemnly ratified, carried into execution; for what was *ordered* is SURE—as the throne of Jehovah, unchangeable as his nature, durable as his being. Though it be but a man's covenant, yet when it has been signed and sealed according to law, none disannulleth or addeth thereto. None can disannul God's covenant, and he himself will not—"My covenant will I not break, says he, nor alter the "thing that is gone out of my lips," *Psalm* lxxxix. 34. I will not add thereto, nor diminish from it: for I have ordered it in ALL things. I have not left one single thing out, not the least circumstance: I have settled the whole plan by mine unerring wisdom, and I will fulfil every title of it by mine almighty power. According to my will the course of nature and grace is infallibly directed, even the most minute events. Every hair is numbered. Not a sparrow falls but by my divine decree.

How safely then may the heirs of promise depend upon a covenant God? And whenever they flee to Jesus for refuge, what strong consolation may they draw from hence, that their salvation is fixed by the immutable counsel, and inviolable oath of the blessed Trinity!

The same divine teacher, who enabled them to believe those truths for the farther establishment of their faith, led them to discover the FREENESS of all covenant mercies. They are promised as free gifts. They are bestowed to the praise of the glory of free grace.

They are not conferred upon the worthy, but upon enemies, upon the ungodly, upon sinners as sinners. No conditions are required, no prerequisites are expected. The motives, which determine God to show mercy to sinners, are not taken from any good in them, or foreseen to be in them. Not for works of righteousness which they have done, or can do; but according to his mercy he saveth them. He does all to the magnifying of the honours of his own mercy. His covenant was so contrived, carried into execution by the life and death of Jesus, applied by the Holy Spirit, that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. No flesh shall glory in his presence. Boasting is for ever excluded; because all is of grace. Wisdom to teach the sinner saving knowledge, righteousness to justify him, strength to keep him, comforts to bless him, heaven to receive him, these are the free gifts of covenant love; for by grace is he saved through faith, and that not of himself, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast. Thus would the Lord hide pride from man, and would teach him practically such scriptures as this—"Not for your sakes do I this, "saith the Lord, be it known unto you, but for mine "holy name's sake," *Ezek.* xxxvi.

Closely connected with this divine lesson is the FULNESS of covenant mercies. Every thing needful for the salvation of the sinner is fully, as well as freely provided by the exceeding riches of grace, and is treasured up by the Father's love in the fulness of the Son. To this the Spirit bears witness in the word of truth, and seals his witness upon the believer's heart. It pleased the Father that in the Word made flesh should ALL fulness dwell, and that out of his fulness his people should receive grace for grace. This is the infinite ocean. There is not a stream, not a drop of grace to be had, but from hence. Jesus Christ, as God-man, has it all in himself, and for the same end, as the head has the senses in itself. He has it to communicate to his members, a fulness of light and life, of sense and

understanding, of love and joy, yea of every spiritual blessing. On him as the head of the body, the church, every believing member is directed to live. On him must he depend at all times; and to him must he go for all things. If he seek pardon and peace, righteousness and holiness, a supply of his wants, strength for his warfare, comforts under his miseries, if he expect life in death, and life eternal, he must make continual use of the fulness of Jesus: for in him dwelleth ALL the fulness of the Godhead bodily. It dwelleth in him, as in an overflowing fountain. The Father's love to his adopted children, the experience of it by the grace of the Spirit, are entirely in and from the salvation of Jesus Christ. Out of his fulness come every covenant mercy of the God-head, and in a rich abundant stream always flowing with some blessing or other into the believer's soul. The enjoyment of it on his part may not be always alike comfortable, but it is always alike sure on God's part. Nothing can stop it. Nothing can turn its course. Unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again. The river of the water of life proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and it will be running on till it come back into its own ocean. The water that I will give him, says Jesus, speaking of the believer, shall be in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, and bringing with it the fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.

No man will see any reason to set out in the way to heaven, until he be made aquainted with those truths. His judgment must be enlightened with the knowledge of them. He will never think of changing his course, until he be made sensible of his own sinful and helpless state; and when this is brought home to his conscience, and he has nothing in himself left to trust in, then he will be led to look abroad for help. The Spirit of God will teach him the doctrines of grace, the nature of the God-head, the persons in the God-head, the covenant of the divine persons, by which every grace and blessing

was freely and fully provided, given by the Father to the Son, in whose fulness they were all laid up for the use of his body the church, and communicated to every member of it through the influence of the Holy Spirit. Thus he is taught that all is of grace from first to last. Whatever good a sinner receives on earth, or enjoys in heaven, is so given as to exclude all boasting, and to lay every proud and self righteous principle in the dust, that grace alone may wear the crown and may have all the glory.

Here then, O my soul, is matter, of close examination. Dost thou know thyself, thy state and condition, and hast thou fled from the wrath to come? Has the light of God's word shone into thy understanding, and made thee to see that thou art indeed set out in the way to heaven? How was this discovered to thee? Did the Holy Spirit ever convince thee of sin, and that thou hast lost the image and forfeited the favour of God? Did thou ever see thyself fallen in Adam, in him a child of wrath, a ruined miserable sinner? Hast thou felt how utterly unable thou art to atone for thy sins, or to make thyself holy? And wast thou brought to this after many legal trials and self-righteous efforts? At last forced to give up all hope in thyself, and to look to the Lord who made heaven and earth, from whom alone thy help could come?

And hast thou been taught the true knowledge of the unity of the Godhead, and of the persons in it, Father, Son, and Spirit, the covenant of the ever-blessed Three, and the absolute security of all covenant mercies, promised by the Father, and engaged to be given to the Son as the head of his body, the church, who is now actually as God-man in possession of them, and by his Spirit he freely and fully bestows them upon his members? for they will never cease to be receiving out of his fulness grace for grace, until they receive out of the same fulness glory for glory.

O my soul examine closely, and prove thyself by the standard of the divine word. Search and try, what the

conviction of thy lost estate has been. Was it deep and practical? Is it an abiding truth with thee, that there is no help, or hope in thyself? And hast thou fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before thee in the Lord Jesus? Is thy knowledge of the Godhead mere theory, or is it brought into practice? Dost thou enjoy the Father's love, through faith in the finished salvation of the Son, by the influence of the Holy Spirit? This is the saving knowledge of the Godhead. And is this thine? Dost thou honour the divine persons by acknowledging their immutable counsel, and immutable oath entered into for the security of the heirs of promise, that they might trust, and not be afraid? Dost thou see with any clearness the absolute safety of relying upon the promises of God, and dost thou expect to draw from hence comfort to thy conscience, and joy to thy heart.

If thou art indeed set out in the way to heaven, art thou settled in the knowledge of thy fallen state? Hast thou found thyself unable to do any thing, but to hasten on thy ruin? and from the sight and sense of this, hast thou been led to see all undertaken for thee, and secured to thee for time and eternity, in the covenant of the ever-blessed Trinity. These truths lie at the very foundation of all comfortable walking with God. See that thou be well grounded in them. The knowledge of thyself is to bring thee to God: the knowledge of God is to lead thee to walk with him. The one is to teach thee to renounce all trust in thyself. The other is to show thee, that thou mayest safely place the confidence of thy heart on thy reconciled Father, thy Saviour, and thy guide. Look up to him, then O my soul, and be often praying to him and saying,

O Lord God, that which I see not, teach thou me. Keep me an humble disciple in the school of Christ. Let me be daily learning there, what I am in myself a fallen sinful creature, justly deserving everlasting destruction from thy presence. O let me never lose sight of my want of a Saviour, nor ever be without the sense of what is said—"Without me ye can do nothing."

Teach me this thou eternal Spirit. Open thou mine understanding to understand the scriptures. What thou hast revealed in them concerning the Godhead, and concerning the counsels and works of the ever-blessed Trinity, that reveal to my soul. Thou hast declared, that no man can say Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost: O shine then into my dark mind, and lead me into the saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus. Make me acquainted with his covenant undertaken, and his perfect fulfilling of them, that by resting on his finished salvation, I may find the Father's love in the Son, his Father, my Father, and may be brought, through thy blessed influence, to have fellowship with the Father and the Son. O lead me into all truth, thou Spirit of wisdom and revelation, that I may know the things which belong to my peace, and may through thee be made wise unto salvation. *Amen.*

CHAP. II.

The believer is reconciled to God, and has the peace of God ruling in his conscience, and they two walk together; because they are now agreed.

It is written in the prophets—"They shall be all "taught of God"—every one of his children shall be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and what they have been taught in the understanding shall be made practical, that it may have its proper effect upon the conscience. And this is answered, when it comes under the authority and power of the word of God, and faithfully accuses or condemns according to that unerring rule.

Conscience supposes the knowledge of some rule, and it consists in comparing a man's state or actions with that rule in order to discover whether they agree with it, or not.

The rule is the scripture, the whole revealed will of

God, which is the unerring, and the only standard of right and wrong; for all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, to teach the man of God what is truth, and to make him wise in it unto salvation. Fallen man has no means of discovering the will of God, but as it is revealed to him. He has no innate knowledge. He has no implanted principles. He is born as ignorant of God, and of the things of God, as a wild ass's colt. His understanding is darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his heart. And he has no means in his own power of attaining any divine knowledge: for he cannot by searching find out God. The world by its wisdom never did find him out. The Hottentots know as much of him as the Greeks and Romans did: indeed the natural man, let him be ever so wise, knoweth not the things of the Spirit of God; neither can he know them; because they are spiritually discerned.

The scripture then is the only rule of right and wrong. Conscience has no direction but this rule. Neither ethics nor metaphysics, no fancied light of dark nature, no lawless law of rebel nature, no human science, whether pretended to be implanted, or by the use of reason to be acquired, have any right to guide the conscience. These are blind leaders of the blind. They undertake, what they are not only unfit, but what they have no warrant for. A parcel of felons in jail may think what they will of their state. They may take it upon them to form a mock court, and to try one another. They may acquit or condemn, as they please; but the judge and the jury will pay no regard to their foolish proceedings. There is a word which is to try us at the last day, and by that we should try ourselves at present. It was revealed for this purpose. And when the revealed truth is clearly understood, then conscience is acting aright, if it finds a true verdict for God, either accusing, or

else excusing, according to the direction of his unerring word.

And this is the work of the Holy Spirit. He enlightened the judgment with the knowledge of the truth, in order to make it practical; which he effects by bringing the conscience to submit to the sovereignty of God in the law, and to submit to the righteousness of God in the gospel. Herein he displays the omnipotent power of his grace, according to the promise, *John* xvi. 8. He carries with demonstration the conviction of guilt, and the conviction of righteousness, to the conscience. By the former he gives the sinner a real heart-felt sense of his sin and misery, and he acknowledges himself a convict of the law, justly deserving all its penalties in time and in eternity. By the latter he sets open a door of hope, showing him the perfect righteousness of the God-man wrought out for such guilty creatures as he is: he enables him to plead it before the throne, and to trust in it for his acceptance; by which means he finds relief in his conscience, and comfort in his heart. Being justified by faith he has peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

What the Holy Spirit teaches has life, as well as light in it. He accompanies his doctrine with the power of God. What he has revealed concerning the state of mankind under the fall, he applies with divine evidence to the conscience. Under his influence the sinner reads those scriptures, and feels the truth of them. "As by one man sin entered into the world and "death by sin, so that death passed upon all men, for "that all have sinned: through the offence of one, "judgment came upon all men to condemnation; "for it is written, there is none righteous, no not one, "there is none that understandeth, there is none that "seeketh after God: they are all gone out of the way, "they are together become unprofitable, there is none "that doeth good, no not one. Now we know that "what things soever the law saith, it commands them "who are under the law, that every mouth may be

"stopped; and all the world may become guilty before "God." His mouth is stopped. He has no plea to make. No excuse left. What the law saith, he subscribes to. The law brings him in guilty before God, and in his conscience he bears his testimony to the law. He acknowledges it to be holy, just and good, even in its penalties which he deserves to suffer. Formerly he tried, in his own strength, and took great pains to escape them, but now he gives over all those self-righteous attempts. He found, that he laboured in vain to atone for his sins, or to make himself holy. He groans, being burdened under the ruins of the fall. His ignorance, rebellion, apostasy, his corruption in every faculty of soul and body, render him unable to take one step in his return to God. He owns it, and confesses, that without Christ he can do nothing.

O my soul, consider, whether God has taught thee this knowledge of thyself. It is absolutely necessary to reconcile thee to him and to his ways. Thou wilt never heartily agree to walk with him by faith, so long as thou hast any thing of thine own to trust in, or to draw comfort from. Examine then; art thou sensible of thy fall, and dost thou feel the sad effects of it? Dost thou know what it is to be alienated from the life of God? What! dost thou find to this day the opposition of thy sinful nature to the holy law, the flesh lusting in thee against the spirit? Has God thus convinced thee of sin? If he has, then in thy conscience thou submittest to what the law says of thy state. Thy mouth is stopped, and thou art guilty before God. Thou hast nothing of thine own to urge in arrest of judgment. This is an enlightened conscience; so far it speaks for God, and is guided by his unerring word. O pray to the Lord the Spirit, and beg of him to guide thee into all truth, that he may bring thy conscience to submit to the righteousness of Jesus, and to be a faithful witness for him.

This is his proper work in the soul, and what he undertook in the everlasting covenant. When he is come,

says Christ, he shall convince the world of righteousness: he shall testify of me; that I am made of God righteousness to believers; and he shall glorify me, as Jehovah their righteousness: thus he shall teach them my righteousness, with which the Father is satisfied, and he shall through faith apply it effectually to their consciences, and they shall also be satisfied with it. Being justified by faith they shall have peace with God through their Lord Jesus Christ.

Righteousness is a perfect conformity to the law: if it be tried by the balance of the sanctuary, it is full weight; if by the standard, it is full measure; if judgment be laid to the line and righteousness to the plummet, it is quite upright. There is no defect in it of any kind. This is the righteousness of the law—it must be perfect and continual, failing in no one point: for the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And it is an adjudged case, that there is none righteous, no not one. It is left upon record that ALL have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

When the Holy Spirit has convinced a sinner of his being in this unrighteous state, then it becomes an important inquiry—how can the Judge of all the earth ever look upon and treat a sinner, as if he was a righteous person? To which the gospel answers directly—"God hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no "sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God "IN him." This was agreed upon in the covenant of the eternal three. The Father undertook to maintain the honour and dignity of his law and justice. His coequal Son undertook for his people to come in their nature, and to stand in their place and stead; to act for them, and to suffer for them. As their surety, he made himself answerable for their debt of obedience and for their debt of suffering. Accordingly, when the great law-fulfiller cometh into the world he saith, Lo, I COME TO DO THY WILL, O GOD. He did it in his infinitely

holy life, in which he magnified the precepts of the law, and made them everlastingly honourable. He suffered it in his infinitely holy passion, bearing the sins and sorrows of his people, their curse and wrath in his body and soul upon the tree, until the immense debt being paid, he cried out in the triumph of a conquering, though a dying Jesus, IT IS FINISHED: for through death he conquered death, and him that had the power of death, that is, the devil: he finished the transgression, and made an end of sins, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

This is the great leading truth of the gospel in which the peace of conscience is principally concerned. The justly offended God is here revealed under the character of a reconciled Father. He gave his Son to be a covenant of the people; who was to fulfil all covenant engagements for them, and he has fulfilled them all. The end of his living and dying for them is answered. He has finished the transgression, and has made peace by the blood of his cross. He has brought in everlasting righteousness by his divine obedience, and the Lord is well pleased with *him* for his righteousness sake, yea he is well pleased also with his body the church. He looks upon all the members, as he looks upon the head. He accepts them in the beloved. He beholds them in him with perfect delight, and rests in his love. He is his Father, and their Father. He is related to his whole family in heaven and earth in the closest bonds of fatherly affection, and he makes his love known to them, and sheds it abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. He would have all his children to address him under his dear name—OUR FATHER *which art in heaven*, and to expect from his fatherly love all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.

When this comfortable doctrine is received into the conscience it silences guilt, and produces peace with God. The gospel comes with full authority to establish it in the conscience: for it is therein revealed and purposed to our belief under the character of a divine

RECORD, made authentic and properly enrolled in the court of heaven. The witnesses are the eternal Three. Their record is in the nature of a covenant, confirmed by their joint counsel, and ratified by their joint oath—the two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie. He graciously vouchsafed to give the heirs of promise this perfect security for their salvation, that after they had fled to Jesus for refuge, there might be an end of all strife in their consciences, and they might have strong consolation. Accordingly we read, "There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Fa-"ther, the Word and the Holy Ghost, and these Three "are ONE." A record among men is an authentic testimony in writing, entered by authority in one of the king's courts, in order to preserve the proceedings had upon any suit. This record contains the final determination of the judges in that cause, and in their memorial of it, and therefore imports in itself such uncontrolable evidence, as to admit of no proof to the contrary. The matter of the record is never allowed to be tried by a jury, but is of such credit as not to be questioned in any instance. This is the nature of a record in law. And, if we receive the witness of men, certainly the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, which he hath witnessed of his Son—namely—"He hath given "to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." To which the Spirit beareth witness: because the Spirit is truth. He has revealed the covenant of life and peace, which was between the Father and the Son, he has entered it upon record, and every word of the record may be pleaded: for it is allowed to be good and valid in the court of heaven. As a powerful advocate he pleads the perfect fulfilling of all righteousness in the life and death of the God-man, and the Father's perfect acceptance of what he did and suffered, as the full redemption-price for all his people, and he carries his cause in the court of conscience. The awakened sinner is convinced, that the work of Jesus is a finished salvation, and that the divine record is a sufficient warrant for him

to believe in it. Accordingly he gives it credit, and is enabled to plead it against guilt and fear. Upon which he finds peace with God. Trusting to the blood of sprinkling for pardon, and to righteousness of Jesus for acceptance: he then sees God reconciled to him, and that reconciles him to God, and by the spirit of adoption he cries Abba, Father.

But perhaps it may be said, I believe this, but I do find peace in my conscience. Nay, but you do not believe it; if you did, it would certainly bring present relief: for guilt comes from the broken law, and from the apprehension of punishment deserved; but the law has been restored to its dignity, and made infinitely honourable by the righteousness of Jesus, how can you believe this and yet be under guilt? The punishment was laid upon Jesus, and he suffered all that was due to his people, as their atoning sacrifice, how can you believe this, and yet fear that justice will punish you? A debtor would not fear to be arrested, if his surety had paid the sum, and got him a full discharge. A felon with the king's pardon in his pocket would dishonour it greatly, if he was to live in continual dread and terror of suffering for his crime. Examine carefully and pray for the right understanding of your case, and depend upon it, you will find, that either you do not believe the matter of fact, or the record concerning it.

The matter of fact is the method provided for quieting the guilty conscience—a provision of exceeding rich grace and of everlasting efficacy. The Father gave the Son to be the surety for his people, and to live and to die for them, and in their stead. The Son has finished the work, which the Father gave him to do, and is become the author of their eternal salvation.

The record of this fact is in the scripture. Father, Son, and Spirit, the three witnesses in heaven, have by covenant and oath attested, that there is life for every one who believeth in Jesus. "God so loved the world, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever

" believeth in him should not perish, but have everlast-
" ing life."

Now consider, of what do you doubt? Has Jesus made full atonement for sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness? Has the Father demonstrated again and again his perfect delight in his person, and his infinite satisfaction in his work. Certainly you cannot question this docrine, if you believe the scripture to be a divine revelation. Do you doubt then of God's free promise, or of his faithfulness to fulfil it? What! Can his word be broken? Can his promise fail? His word and promise ratified in the immutable covenant, and sealed with the immutable oath of the eternal Three? This is your warrant to believe. And do you question the veracity of it? " He, that believeth not God, hath " made him a liar." O what a dreadful sin to give the lie to the Holy Trinity! The Father says, whosoever cometh; the Son says, all that come unto me shall be saved; the Spirit says, come whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely, and be saved. Are not these faithful sayings worthy of all credit? especially as they are delivered with divine auhority under the great seal of heaven. If doubts still remain, pray against them, and meditate upon the unreasonableness as well as well as the wickedness of them, and continue to hear and to read the word (for faith cometh, and groweth too by hearing) that you may be enabled to put honour upon it by venturing your soul upon the divine faithfulness to make it good to you.

Perhaps you may believe the record, which God hath given of his Son, but you cannot do it with stedfastness; you can at times stay your mind upon God with sweet peace, but you are not able to maintain it: yea, you lose it when you want it most. How in this case shall the believer keep the peace of God ruling always in his conscience?

It is to be maintained in the same way, by which it was first received. It came by believing, and is thereby

strengthened. By the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ peace was made between God and man, by the sprinkling of his blood peace is made between man and God. When this is applied to the conscience by the Holy Spirit, and received by faith, there is a continual preservative against guilt: "For the blood of Jesus "Christ cleanseth from all sin." Here is the witness of God; and it is always the same. This believed will always bring the same cleansing virtue, and keep the conscience purged from dead works. If at any time guilt defile it, then unbelief has entered, and has been denying, either that the blood of Christ does cleanse from all sin, or that the divine testimony concerning it does deserve credit. Guilt cannot easily enter into the conscience but by one of these two ways. Examine, and see which it is. Do you doubt of the virtue of Christ's blood, or of the trnth of God's record concerning it?

You reply, I dare not question either of them, yet nevertheless I cannot with any settled comfort maintain peace with God. But it is your privilege to maintain it, confirmed to you by the royal charter of grace, and ratified in it by many express promises. Jesus has made peace by the blood of his cross, and if you believe what the God of truth says of it, peace should rule in your heart always: for all things are well ordered for you, and sure in the everlasting covenant. On the part of God all is unalterably fixed and settled. What is it then, which unsettles you? Is it something you find in yourself? Is it from indwelling sin, remaining corruption, a body of sin and death, or from the weakness of your faith and of your other graces? What! have you forgotten, that from all these the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth? Is it from a suspicion, that your peace is not right, beeause it ebbs and flows! This should humble, but not discourage you: because there is a gracious provision made to remove your suspicion. God has taken the charge both of you and of your peace: he keeps both by his mighty power, as it is written, the peace of God which surpasses all understanding shall keep with

a safe guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. You are as safe in the hand of God at the lowest ebb, as at the highest spring-tide of sensible comfort: because your safeguard is almighty, and he is equally concerned about your peace, whether you feel it, or not. Your sense of it may vary, but he varies not. There is in him no variableness, nor shadow of turning. How should the belief of this stay your mind upon your God, and keep guilt out of the conscience, even when you are walking in darkness, and have no light!

O my soul, meditate upon those precious truths. Give thyself wholly to them. Consider how deeply they enter into the very being of thy peace. Unless they be understood, thou canst not know the way of peace; and unless they be received by faith, thy conscience will not be purged from guilt and unbelief. And while these defile it, thou canst not look upon God as reconciled, or delight thyself in him or in his ways. Can two walk together, except they be agreed? But when they are agreed, and of one mind, then walking with God becomes pleasant, and all his paths are peace.

Search then, and examine thyself, O my soul, and that not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God, but closely and thoroughly by the light of the divine word, and under the teaching of the divine Spirit. Dost thou understand what is revealed concerning the way of peace—what was covenanted in the counsel of the eternal Three—and what has been done in consequence of it? Jesus Christ is the great peace-maker. He has made peace through the blood of his cross. The Father sent him, gave him to be a covenant of the people, to fulfil for them all righteousness, and to be their atoning sacrifice. The Father has seen the work which he gave him to do, and has accepted it: is perfectly satisfied with it, and therefore is infinitely delighted with him and with all his. He would now be known by the high style and title of the GOD of PEACE. Fury is not in him to those whom he sees in the beloved. He is a Father, fully, for ever reconciled to all his children

in Christ Jesus. He loves them, as he loves him, with every kind feeling of the most tender parent. And he will bring every one of them to partake with their glorified head of the blessings of his everlasting love.

If thine understanding be enlightened with this knowledge of God, is it effectual in thy conscience? Canst thou plead it there? This is the principal thing. Hast thou a good conscience, freed from guilt and condemnation, by believing the record which God hath given of his Son? He is well pleased with him for his righteousness sake. His soul delighted in the sweet smelling savour of his Son's sacrifice. Because he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore the Father hath highly exalted him. This is the witness of God. Dost thou yield to it, and give it full credit? What canst thou set to thy seal that God is true, and that what satisfied him has perfectly satisfied thee, and therefore the peace of God rules in thy conscience always and by all means?

Remember, this is thy privilege. Thou art called to the enjoyment of it. The evidence is as full as could be desired, for the ending of all strife in thy conscience. The greatest honour thou canst put upon the divine witnesses, is so to end it, as to suffer no appeal to be made from their decree. Thy conscience should join issue. It should say the same that God does. It should plead thy discharge from guilt under the broad seal of heaven; and should stop the mouth of unbelief with those words written in golden letters in the royal charter of grace—"There is NO condemnation to them that "are in Christ Jesus—They are freely forgiven ALL "trespasses"——"They are justified from ALL things "—thy sins and iniquities, says God himself, will I re-"member NO MORE." These are the immutable words of truth. They cannot be broken. O my soul, put honour upon them. Believe them without doubt or wavering. Why dost thou draw back thy confidence? Trust, and not be afraid. Thou mayest safely venture to believe all that the Lord hath spoken. He will

make it good; and the more thou believest, the more will be made good. More faith will bring thee in a richer revenue of peace. The Lord increase thy faith. May it entirely influence thy conscience, that it may agree with God; neither questioning the infinite value of the righteousness and atonement of Immanuel, nor yet the faithfulness of his promise, under which thou claimest them—"WHOSOEVER WILL may take them freely."

Let thy faith be ever so well established, yet thou wilt meet with something every day, to try it; but remember, the foundation on which thou standest, cannot fail, and none, nothing shall remove thee from it. The Lord brought thee to build upon this foundation. He hath begun the good work, and he will not leave his work unfinished. The top-stone shall certainly be brought forth with shouting GRACE—GRACE: for his love is like himself. His purposes, his word, his works change not. What if thou feel many things wrong in thyself, thou art sometimes low in spirits; thou canst not be pleased with thy corruption, and thou art not pleased with thy duties, thy graces are weak, thy love not as it should be, thy best services unprofitable; yet those very things rightly understood, and improved by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will be the means of establishing thy conscience in the peace of God. They will lead thee every day to a greater dependance upon sovereign grace: for they will leave thee nothing to trust in, but the righteousness and the atonement of Immanuel, nothing to keep thee, but his faithfulness to his word and work, and nothing to bless thee but his free covenant mercy. Thus they will work together for thy good. Trials will settle thee. Enemies will confirm thee in peace. Troubles will bring thee nearer to God. Amidst all discouragements thou wilt have this promise to stay thy soul upon—"I "will never leave thee nor forsake thee." His friendship is fixed. It springs from the purpose and love of his own breast, and therefore was and is always un-

changeably the same in him. Whom he loveth he loveth unto the end.

Well then, O my soul, thou hast examined thyself. How is it with thee? Dost thou know the way of peace? Art thou at peace with God, being justified by faith? Canst thou plead this peace, and maintain it in thy conscience? Is it a good conscience, does it witness for God? Is it a pure conscience, cleansed from guilt and condemnation? Is it satisfied that the Father is perfectly reconciled through the life and death of his Son? And is it satisfied with the divine record giving thee a free grant of the benefits of his life and death, and putting thee into possession by believing? Art thou of one heart and of one mind in this matter with the Father, and now being at peace with him agreed to walk in his way? If indeed he has been thus gracious unto thee, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise him for the exceeding riches of his love. What a mercy is it, that he hath brought thee into the way of peace! O go on, fear not. Set out daily with an holy humble boldness to walk with thy God. And for the guiding of thy feet in his way, and that thy steps may not decline from it, be diligent in hearing and reading the word of God. Study it. Pray over it. Mind what encouragement it gives thee: "Having "therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest "by the blood of Jesus, by that new and living way, "which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, "that is to say, his flesh, and having an high priest "over the house of God, let us draw near with a true "heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts "sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies "washed with pure water." *Heb.* x. 19, 20, &c. What perfect peace is here proclaimed to the children of God! Sin had separated them from him, but there is access through Jesus. He is the way to the Father. He is a new way, in opposition to the old way of works, which upon the fall was shut for ever. He is a living way, all that are alive to God live by the faith of the Son of

God. He is a consecrated way, every thing needful for their holy walk being provided in him. And they are required to walk in this way with boldness; trusting to the blood of Jesus, and depending on the intercession of the high-priest over the house of God, they have access with confidence into the holiest. It is their undoubted privilege to draw near with a true heart, not like a double-minded man, wavering and unstable; but with full assurance of faith, entirely satisfied that God in Christ has nothing in his breast, but love towards them; therefore they should believe in him, and serve him without fear, having their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, maintaining peace with God through the continual application of the blood of Jesus, and having their bodies washed with pure water, body and soul being cleansed from the guilt and filth of sin by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

O may this be my happy experience. May I ever have grace to draw near to my reconciled Father with a good conscience. Yea, Lord, this is my heart's desire. I would walk with thee day by day in perfect peace. O deny me not the request of my lips. Glory be to thy free love, that through Jesus I am suffered to have access into thy presence, and am commanded to come with boldness into the holiest of all. Lo, I come before thee, holy Father, to plead the blood-shedding and the righteousness of thy dear Son; and I hope my plea will be admitted, through the intercession of the high priest of the house of God. O look, thou God of peace, upon the face of thy Beloved. See me in him, I desire to be found in him. And for his sake let the faithful witness for thy love in Jesus abide with me, that in hearing and reading thy word, in prayer and meditation he may increase my faith in thee and love to thee.

O God the Holy Ghost, I beseech thee to make practical upon my heart what thou hast revealed in scripture of the Father's love. Deliver me from guilt and condemnation by the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. Apply it effectually. Apply it continually. Help me

to believe with more comfort in my conscience, and with more stedfastness in my walk, that his blood cleanseth from all sin. O blessed Spirit, carry on thy work in my soul. Lead me from faith to faith, that I may at all times have freedom to enter within the vail to a reconciled God and Father, and may be able to maintain peace with him against doubts and fears, against corruptions and enemies. O teach me to draw near to him with a true heart, stedfastly persuaded of his love, and in full assurance of faith. This is thy gracious office: O fulfil it in me, that my heart may be sprinkled from an evil conscience, and my body washed with pure water. Let me find grace sufficient for me, for Jesus' sake; to whom, with thee O Father, and the eternal Spirit, three Persons in one Jehovah, be equal honour and glory for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. III.

The believer in his heart cleaves to God, and walks with him in love.

THIS depends entirely upon a good conscience. There can be no love of God, unless there be first peace with God. No convinced sinner can love him, until he believes him to be reconciled. While guilt remains in the conscience, enmity will keep its place in the heart: for so long as he looks upon his sins unpardoned, and God the just avenger of them, he must consider him as a jealous God, and a consuming fire. In this view there is every thing that can increase his guilty fears. And while these defile the conscience, instead of walking with God, he would run away from him, and like the first offenders, he would foolishly try to hide himself from the presence of God.

But when the Holy Spirit has discovered the way of peace, and has enabled the sinner to find peace, being

pardoned and justified through faith in Christ Jesus, then he looks upon God in another light. He can view him, according as he has proclaimed himself—The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin. Under this endearing character the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is revealed in scripture. Thus would he be considered in the covenant of grace—related in the nearest bond of affection to all his children. He is their father, the father of mercies, freely loving, freely forgiving, freely accepting them in the beloved. The Holy Spirit convinces them of it, and sheds the Father's love to them abroad in their hearts; the sense of which sweetly inclines them to love him again. Love begets love. God has put on the tender bowels of an everloving parent, and he gives them the affection of dutiful children. They love him, because he first loved them. Then it is the delight of their souls to cultivate and improve this love on their part, and it becomes their heaven upon earth to walk with their God in the ways wherein he has appointed to meet them, to love them, and to bless them.

The main point then in the christian walk is to know how to maintain peace in the conscience: because this is the powerful motive upon which the believer first sets out, and it is the great spring which keeps them going on. While his conscience continues pure and undefiled, and the peace of God rules in it, all is well. He does not stop, he does not halt, in the way. But when guilt enters, unbelief certainly follows close after it, and then there is a fresh controversy in the court of conscience. Many doubts arise, and afford matter for strife and debate. The sense of peace is not only disturbed, but is also for a time destroyed by such suspicions as these—"Am I freely pardoned—Is God fully "reconciled to me—Is he still my loving Father? I "fear not. I have done so and so—He is certainly "displeased with me, and therefore I dare not approach

"him, as I used to do, with love and confidence." This is an evil conscience. It is not purged from dead works; because guilt is still in it, and this keeps the soul at a distance from God. It begets a coldness and a shyness to him, and by shutting out the comfortable sense of his love, makes way for fear of wrath. Then the motives to walk with God lose their influence, and an evil heart of unbelief tempts the man to depart from the living God.

Look well then, O my soul, to this leading truth, which has such universal influence over the Christian walk. Attend to the peace of thy conscience. See it be true peace, and mind it be well settled. Learn to maintain it upon gospel-motives. The heart follows the determination of conscience; and cleaves to the Lord, or departs from him, according as the conscience excuses or accuses. It is therefore absolutely necessary for our peace, that we should know how God has shewn himself reconciled in Christ Jesus. The character of him in the scriptures should be studied. Whoever has been enabled to call him, Abba, Father, should implore the assistance of the Holy Spirit for an increase of faith, and should make use of all appointed means for his growth in the knowledge of the love of his heavenly Father. The apostle is upon this subject in *Romans* v.—a chapter abounding with powerful arguments to establish the peace of God in thy conscience; in order that the love of God may rule in the heart. He gives us this account of the privileges of a justified man. He has peace with God through Jesus Christ —by whom he has a free access to God—is in a state of grace—stands in it by the power of God—has reason to rejoice (come what will) in hope of the glory to be revealed—and whatever he meets with in the way to glory, should increase the rejoicing of his hope, and confirm his heart in the love of God to him. Observe how divinely the apostle speaks: "Therefore being "justified by faith, we have peace with God through "our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have ac-

"cess by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and "rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only "so, but we rejoice in tribulations also, knowing well "that tribulation worketh patience, and patience ex- "perience, and experience hope; and hope maketh not "ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in "our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us."

What privileges! how many, how free, how blessed are here declared to be the portion of the justified man, which he is to enjoy in his reconciled God! Each of them tending to establish peace in his conscience, and love in his heart, that he may delight himself in God and in his ways. The first and chief blessing in experience, which draws after it all the rest, is the Spirit.—

The Holy Ghost is given unto him, to be a witness for Jesus, and shed abroad the Father's love through him. He comes as the Spirit of life to quicken the soul, which had been dead in trespasses and sins, and to bring it to the knowledge of salvation, which he does, secondly, by the gift of faith.

Being justified by faith. He enables the sinner to believe in the finished work of the God-man, and to trust to the free grant of it in the word of God: whereby he sees himself fully justified: Through the atonement of Jesus freed from sin and guilt; through the righteousness of Jesus entitled to life and glory, and therefore, thirdly, he has—

Peace with God through Jesus Christ his Lord—He sees God is at peace with him—perfectly and continually reconciled. The peace is everlasting which was made through the blood of the everlasting covenant. The belief of this quiets and satisfies the sinner's conscience; which being purged by the blood, and justified by the righteousness of Jesus Christ his Lord, is at peace, is freed from guilty fears, and is reconciled to God, yea to the justice of God, who can now be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. To what high honour is he then called! He is admitted into friendship with God, and has,

Fourthly, *Access by faith into this grace, wherein he stands*—access to a mercy-seat, to which he is invited to come freely, as a beloved child to an affectionate parent. Boldness and access with confidence are required and commanded. "Let us come boldly to the throne "of grace: having boldness to enter into the holiest "by the blood of Jesus," let us by faith make use of that new and living way, which he hath opened for us. O what a mercy is it thus to have access to a gracious Father! how much is the mercy increased by his settling his children in it! We STAND in it, says the apostle, denoting the being fixed in a state of perfect acceptance, conferred by sovereign grace, brought into it by unchangeable love, and kept in it by the power of a faithful God. How strengthening to faith, how encouraging to hope! for,

Fifthly, *We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* Faith relies upon the truth of what God hath promised, and hope waits for the enjoyment of the good in the promise, but more especially for the glory which is to be revealed. This hope of glory is full of rejoicing: because every thing which hope looks at and draws its joy from, depends on the truth and faithfulness of a covenant God. There can be no failing on his part, and therefore on the believer's there can be no disappointment: On this ground hope casts its anchor, both sure and stedfast, and finds all safe during the storms of life, yea, has many a sweet foretaste of the promised glory, brought into the soul by these very storms: for,

Sixthly, *We rejoice in tribulations also.* These are so far from taking away the joy of the justified man, that they tend greatly to increase it, and to make it more holy, as well as more happy. Tribulations produce a plentiful harvest of blessings, they bring forth

Patience, giving occasion to exercise the graces of the Spirit, to find the truth and the power of them, and thereby working submission under the cross to the will of God. "It is good for me, says David, that I have "been afflicted;" his troubles brought him to God—

"Before I was afflicted, I went astray." His troubles kept him near to God, dependent on the divine strength to bear them with patience, and for an happy issue out of them. Whereby he learnt

Experience, which follows suffering and patience. Tribulations teach us what we are as sinners, and what God is to his reconciled children. They make us sensible of our weakness, and of our being strong only in the Lord—of our misery, and of his comforts—of what we deserve, and of what he saves us from—they bring us to live out of ourselves, upon the sure mercies of a covenant God: whereby our hope in him being tried, and by trials confirmed, we discover his love to us in suffering, and by daily experience become quite satisfied, that our

Hope is the grace of the Holy Spirit: for it answers the scripture-character: it rejoices in tribulation. It has good reason so to do. It experiences God's faithfulness. Every thing promised being made good to us in time, we thereby grow up into the full assurance of hope, that we shall not fail of receiving the promised glory. And this

Hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us. He is given to satisfy our hearts of the love of God to us, and to lead us to study the nature and the perfections of his love. Behold! what manner of love, what a free, full, sovereign, and everlasting love, the Father hath bestowed upon us. It is actually bestowed and enjoyed by the power of the Holy Ghost. He shows us, how the Father loved us, even when we were without strength; yea herein God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were sinners and enemies, he gave his Son to live and die for us, much more then being now justified, we shall be saved from wrath, and brought to glory, through him. How does this commend and set off the love of God! It is the first cause of all the graces here mentioned, and bestows them upon the most unworthy. Faith, justification by

faith, access to God, standing in a justified state, rejoicing in hope of glory; and rejoicing in the way to it even in tribulations, because they exercise and improve patience, and put our graces to such trials, as convince us, that they are the true graces of the Holy Spirit, and that we shall never be ashamed of our hope in God. In this golden chain of experience love is the uppermost link. It was the first, and draws after it all the rest. The free love of the Father gave his Son for us, and with him gave us all things. The same love has now given his Spirit to us, and he has enabled us to know and to believe, that we are justified, have access to a reconciled God, stand accepted before him, &c. and that he is our loving God and Father in Jesus. The sense of this warms the heart, and sweetly and powerfully influences the affections to delight in, and to walk in love with such an exceedingly gracious and merciful God.

In this delightful portion on scripture the Holy Spirit teaches us, how he brings sinners to know that God loves them. It is by believing in the righteousness and atonement of the Son of God. Hence spring peace and love—peace with God in the conscience, and love to God in the heart. There is an inseparable connection between those two graces. The one cannot exist without the other. Whoever knows the God of peace will find that God is love: for being justified by faith, he will thereby see that God is at peace with him, and himself in a state of free acceptance before him, in which he shall stand and be kept safe, until he receive the promised glory. The hope of which will be confirmed by his daily experience of God's faithfulness, making all things, even tribulations, work together for his good in the way to glory; thus will the Holy Spirit satisfy him of the love of God to his soul. And the persuasion of his love begets love. It softens the hard heart. It warms the cold heart. It works kindly upon all the affections, and by setting before them every possible good to be enjoyed in their reconciled God, it mightily dis-

poses them to seek their supreme happiness in walking humbly and closely with him.

Attend then, O my soul, to this scripture. Meditate upon the experience of which it treats. Pray for it. Pray for more of it. And above all, observe the great truth here taught thee by the Holy Ghost, namely, that thou canst not have any true love of God, but what arises from the sense of his being at peace with thee in Jesus. O beware of false teachers: for there is great reason. Many talk big of their loving God for his own inherent loveliness. A fundamental mistake. Mystics, Quakers, natural religion men, dreaming metaphysicians, and the motley tribe of moralists, and deists, pretend to love an absolute God, without viewing him in the covenant of grace, or as he has revealed himself in the incarnation of his Son. There has been no love of this kind in any heart upon earth for near six thousand years. Adam in paradise might love him thus. But when driven out of paradise for sin, he could love him so no more. The promised seed of the woman, the word made flesh, became then the object of his faith, and the only ground of his love. The scripture has clearly determined this—"We love him, because he first loved "us—And in this was manifested the love of God to-"wards us, because that God sent his only begotten "Son into the world, that we might live through him." When the Holy Ghost has taught this love of God to sinners, and by believing has manifested it to their hearts, then they love him upon christian principles, and sinners cannot love him upon any other. They love him for that infinite mercy which led him to send his only begotten Son into the world to finish the salvation of his people. They love him for sending the Holy Ghost to enable them to see the everlasting sufficiency of this salvation, and to believe the record of God concerning it; whereby they come to experience how much the Father loved them. This is heaven begun. The Father's love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost is the foretaste of glory. Whoever enjoys it has

found what is more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold, sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb. O it is indeed heaven upon earth. To preserve it, to improve it, is become the one study of the happy believer. The panting of his soul is after more of this love. The prayer of his faith is, O thou eternal Spirit, help me so to walk with my most loving Father, as that I may maintain peace with him in my conscience, and a growing love to him in my heart, until thou bring me to the enjoyment of everlasting peace and love.

The prayer of a righteous man prevaileth much, being offered with energy. By the love of the Spirit it is answered. He not only preserves, but also increases his own graces. He leads the believer to fresh discoveries of the Father's love, and puts him into possession of the exceeding rich treasures of it. He helps him to draw very strong arguments for the comfort of his heart from the perfect FREENESS of divine love. Thus he reasons—

Although I am beset with temptations, and assaulted with corruptions, and in a world of troubles, yet I need not fear but God will bring me safe through all; for I know he loves me. It is plain he does, I could never have loved him, unless he had first freely loved me. My love is only the reflection of his. I had been convinced of sin, but it was not from myself: the conviction was of God. I have been convinced of righteousness, and I put my whole trust in the righteousness of Jesus. He is the only ground of my hope. I now rest my soul upon the sure foundation, which he hath laid. And this faith is not of myself. It is the gift of God. I ascribe it to his sovereign grace, that I have been enabled to look upon the Father as reconciled to me, pardoning me through the blood-shedding of his Son, accounting me righteous through the obedience of his Son, and in him accepting, loving, and blessing me. How could I experience these things but by the power of the Holy Ghost? And for what did I deserve to experience them? The reason must be found in the

riches of his own free grace. Did the Father foresee any thing good in me, for which he chose me in his Son? Was it for any worthiness of mine, that the Son vouchsafed to take flesh, and to live and to die for me? Was it for any foreseen works, faithfulness, or diligence in means, that the Holy Ghost called me to know, to believe, and to enjoy the Father's love through the Son's salvation? O, no. Away with such thoughts. I dare claim nothing for mine own, but sin and shame. Not unto me, Lord, not unto me, but unto thee be all the glory. It was the good pleasure of thine own will, which chose me before the foundation of the world, and accepted me in the beloved; and now I know that thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth. I experience the happy fruit and effect of them. I am brought to believe in thee, and to love my God and Father, which I am satisfied I could never have done, if thy free love had not first purposed to save me, and now carried thy purposes into execution. To the praise of the glory of thy distinguishing grace, I am in possession of the things which accompany salvation. O give me more grace, that I may daily make a better use of them, and may return thee better praise for thy free gifts of free grace.

It is free, and it is also COVENANT love. This is another of its divine properties: God commendeth his love towards the heirs of promise by giving them full security for its unchangeableness. And this view the Holy Spirit opens to them for the support of their faith in times of trial. When they are walking in darkness and have no light, troubled on every side, without are fightings, within are fears, when in great heaviness through failings in duty, through risings of corruption, or through manifold temptations, then he discovers to them the treasures of covenant love, and enables them to draw rich consolation from that heavenly storehouse. An heir of promise under his teaching is often supported in this way: It is true, I am in trouble, but not forsaken. What if every thing I have and am

in myself makes against me, yet God is on my side, a covenant God: for I believe the eternal Three entered into covenant before all worlds, and with manifold wisdom ordered all things relating to the heirs of promise. For their sakes, and to end all strife in their consciences about the certainty of their salvation, it pleased the blessed Trinity to enter into covenant, and to confirm their covenant by oath, thus giving them two immutable things to trust in, in which it is impossible for God to lie. O how strengthening to faith is this view of the unchangeableness of covenant love! If it be but a man's covenant, being properly signed and sealed, no one disannulleth or addeth thereto. And who shall disannul or add to the covenant of the Trinity? The creature cannot. God will not. His purpose of bringing many sons to glory is unalterably fixed in his own mind, and in order to make it a sure ground for their faith, he confirmed his immutable covenant by his immutable oath. On this security I rest my soul. A covenant God has enabled me to trust in his covenant engagements. Hence I see every thing relating to my salvation absolutely certain in the counsel and covenant of God; and I look upon my faith to be one of the effects of my being in the covenant. And faith as a covenant gift is an immutable gift. What a blessing is it, that the gifts and calling of God are without repentance! It has been given me on the behalf of Christ to believe. And is not this from covenant love? What else could bring me to trust in covenant faithfulness? Therefore by believing I have immutable things to depend upon for the certainty of my salvation. Upon them would I stay my soul, as well I may, and fix my heart upon them. O that I could bring more glory to my covenant God by trusting him with unshaken confidence! His love to me demands it at my hands. His love contrived the plan of salvation. Love provided every thing needful to carry it into execution. The evidence, which he has given of this, was from the overflowings of love. His word of promise, ratified by covenant, confirmed

by oath, the oath of the holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, made to satisfy the heirs of promise of the immutability of the divine will concerning them—O what miracles of love are these! And all to assure them, that the heart of Jehovah is invariably towards them for good! Yes, Lord, this is the great love wherewith thou lovest me. And this is the evidence of thy love. Thou hast brought me to believe it, and put some honour upon it. I desire to trust to thy covenant engagements without wavering. Establish, strengthen, settle my faith. Increase it from day to day, that I may grow in the knowledge and experience of that love which passeth knowledge. For

It is a free, a covenant, and also an EVERLASTING love. This is another of its most glorious properties. His love knows neither beginning nor end. It is without variableness or shadow of turning. The heart of God is always one and the same towards his chosen people: for he loveth them freely. The motives to it were all in, and from his own breast. The covenant was distinguishing love, secured to the heirs of promise by the most solemn engagements. And this crowns all. His love is of the same date with the covenant—not only before all worlds, but also from eternity. Therefore it is frequently called in scripture an everlasting covenant, and covenant love is said to be according to the eternal purpose, which he had purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: whereby before the foundations of the world were laid, he hath constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made to honour. Here is a never failing source of comfort to a believing heart. Meditate, O my soul, upon it. Consider what God hath done for thee, and give him the glory of his precious love. Has he not called thee by his Spirit, working in thee in due season? Hast thou not obeyed the call? Dost thou not depend upon the finished work of God thy Saviour?

Art thou not justified freely by faith in him? Art thou not seeking daily to mortify the works of the flesh and thy earthly members, and that thy mind may be drawn up to high and heavenly things? Certainly these are good proofs of the purposes of the Father's love towards thee: because these are the happy effects of his purposes now taking place in my soul. O how great should this consideration establish and confirm thy faith of eternal salvation to be enjoyed by Christ, and thereby kindle thy love towards God. He has indeed drawn thee by the sweet attraction of his Spirit unto himself, and he has explained to thee the motive for his so doing—"Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, "therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." His love discovered to thee in time is the fruit of his love before time: for the one is the effect of the other. If love had not been always in his heart towards thee, thy heart could never have been drawn in love to him. But he has drawn it. And thou art seeking to have it drawn more closely to him. Is it not thy daily wish; O for more love to my gracious Father—what a love has he shewn to me—what a free, covenant, everlasting love! And yet, alas! what poor returns do I make him? Holy Spirit of love, raise and exalt my affections, and let the consideration of the wonderful love of my heavenly Father to me increase mine to him, and let mine abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all sensible experience.

The Holy Spirit who is the great teacher and manifester of the Father's love, has revealed these properties of it in scripture for the establishment of the faith of the children of God. He would have them to believe assuredly, that God is their Father, not in name only, but indeed and in truth; that he has the bowels of the tenderest parent, and that he freely, fully, everlastingly loves them in his dear Son. As he loves him, so he loves them. He embraces the head and the members with the same affection. And because they can hardly believe this in times of trial and trouble, the Holy Spi-

rit would therefore satisfy their hearts of it by discovering to them the unchangeableness of their Father's love, as it has been manifested in the divine covenant, and confirmed with the divine oath. In both which the witness of the Father to his children is given in this manner—I have freely loved you, I have engaged to love you, and I will ever be mindful of my covenant engagements—as I live, saith the Lord, I will love you unto the end—yea, I will bless you with all spiritual and eternal blessings in Christ Jesus—what he, your elder brother, is now in glory, that will my love make you—the mountains shall depart, and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenent of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on you.

These are faithful sayings, and worthy of all acceptation. O evil heart of unbelief, what pretence hast thou to reason against the truth of them? O ye of little faith, wherefore do ye doubt of receiving the goodness of them? Your Father is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man that he should alter his purpose. Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good? Yea, the purpose of his heart, spoken with his mouth, shall be made good with his arm: all his perfections stand engaged to establish his faithful word, and therefore it is a safe ground to build and rest upon. Trusting to it the believer may boldly claim the promised blessings of his Father's love, and with a hope that will never make him ashamed, he may expect a growing enjoyment of its free covenant and eternal blessings.

Well then, O my soul, thou hast considered the subject. What are thy sentiments of the love of the Father? Are they such as the scripture teaches? Take heed of error. A little mistake here will have dreadful effects upon thy walk. Dost thou believe, that thou, coming to the Father through faith in the life and death of his co-equal Son, art pardoned and justified before him, and that this thy coming to the Father through

the Son is from the grace of the Spirit? Therefore the Three that bear record in heaven do witness to thy being an object of covenant love. Does this witness keep thy conscience quiet, and thy heart happy? Canst thou plead it against guilt and fear, and maintain the influence of it in dark and trying times? The love of thy heavenly Father is immutable: dost thou experience it to be so? It is everlasting. Canst thou depend upon it as such? It has provided all blessings for thee in Jesus: art thou receiving them out of his fulness, grace for grace? It is proposed to thy faith in *John* xvii. and in *Eph.* iii. as a never failing spring of consolation. Read and try, whether thou art practically acquainted with what is there written. Examine the character of the Father's love; and be assured what is not agreeable to it, is not the teaching of the Holy Spirit. His office in thy soul is to witness to what he hath revealed in the scripture, to explain it to thine understanding, to make it the ground of thy faith, and the enjoyment of thy heart. Dost thou then understand, and believe, and enjoy the Father's love according to what the Holy Spirit has testified of it?

Perhaps thou art clear in thine understanding, but through the weakness of thy faith has but little enjoyment of the love of God. Why is thy faith weak? Search into the cause (depend upon it God is not the cause) and having discovered it, inquire into the remedy. There is provision made in the covenant for all the infirmities of thy faith; for it was well ordered in all things and sure, and thy faith was well ordered and sure—infallible securities were provided in the covenant to make it sure. That thou shouldst have it, that thou shouldst keep it, and keep it too unto the end, the blessed Trinity have engaged by their immutable counsel, and their immutable oath. Therefore thou art now kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. The power of God, which is thy keeper, has given thee faith, and keeps thy faith, that it fail not. Thou and it are well kept. A covenant God has the charge of

both. Almighty love watches over thee, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Till these fail, thy faith cannot fail. O what powerful motives are these to induce thee to believe without wavering! Consider them carefully. And may the Lord render them the means of strengthening thy faith, and of thereby enabling thee to cleave more closely in love to thy heavenly Father.

It may be thou art hindered from living by unshaken faith, because thou hast so little love to God—he ought to have all thy heart and soul, and mind and strength, but it grieves thee to observe what a small part he has of them. This view is always humbling. Our love at best is not what it ought to be. It is not constant: it ebbs and flows. It is not perfect: the flesh lusteth always contrary to the Spirit. It is not what God deserves, as payment for love received: who will compute the full value of his love to one redeemed sinner? On earth it surpasseth knowledge. In heaven it surpasseth all returns of praise. The highest love of glorified saints is only acknowledgment; but not payment. They are perfectly humble, and therefore willing that God should have all the glory of their salvation. To him they ascribe it. The same mind in thee would refine thy love, and make it something like their's. When thou art considering thy love to God, and ashamed at the sight of it, then look at his. Look especially at his, when thine is little. Believing views of his will increase thine. Thine has nothing else to excite it, or to nourish it. Thou art not called upon to warm thyself with the sparks of thy love to God, but with the pure constant flame of his love to thee. His is to keep up thine. His is the first cause, and thine is but the effect. The experience of his will heal all the infirmities of thine. When thy love is little, unsettled, cold, and dull, then study the divine properties of his: these rightly understood will increase, settle, warm, and actuate thine affections. By believing meditation thou wilt find a pardon provided for thy little love: the sense

of it will comfort thy conscience. Thy heart will grow hot within thee: while thou art musing the fire will kindle. It will break out. Thou wilt speak with thy tongue praise and thanksgiving to thy loving God and Father.

Thou art willing then, O my soul, and ready to set out to follow thy God. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit thou hast chosen him for thy portion, and in a constant dependence upon his grace thou hast taken his way for thy daily walk. How great is the love, wherewith he loveth thee! Survey it. Measure, if thou canst, the dimensions of it in thine own particular case. The more thou art acquainted with it, the readier wilt thou be to give him all the glory of it, and to make such acknowledgments as these:

I speak the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that being justified by faith I have found peace, and free access to a reconciled God. We are agreed, and now I desire to walk with him. He is my Father in Jesus, and I know he has bowels of the tenderest affection for me. I ought not, it would be base in me, to question it, since he has shed his love abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost; who has made me of one mind, of one heart, and of one way with himself. His way is become mine: for he has reconciled me to it by causing me to see, that he chose me freely, as an object of his electing love, that he gave his Son to finish salvation work for me, and that he has now given his Spirit to me, who has called me, and given me ears to hear, who has bestowed on me faith and hope, and has enabled me to look upon these as fruits of the Father's covenant grace, and everlasting favour. O what exceeding riches of love are these! If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered. What am I, that I should be accepted in the beloved? His Father mine. He sees me, loves me, yea blesses me in him. My title is clear to all spiritual blessings, because God being my God in Jesus, all things are mine. He will make them all

work together for my good. He that withheld not his own Son, but gave him for me, how shall he not with him freely give me all things? Having his free grant of them in the word of promise, and trusting to his faithfulness, I have set out to walk with my divine Friend and Father, hoping to enjoy his loving presence all the way to heaven. I would not aim at getting any new title to his love, but to have new enjoyment. Every day I am seeking for more knowledge, and for more experience of his abundant love to me in his beloved Son. And for this end I would walk close with him in his way—not to buy his love, it is inestimable—not to merit it, free grace and merit cannot stand together—not that I may deserve it for my walk, but may freely receive it of him in my walk—not that he may give it me for walking with him, but that in walking with him I may enjoy what he has already given me. His love is a free gift. I would by faith enjoy it in time, as I hope by sense to enjoy it in eternity. Whatever blessing, strength, victory, or comfort, I stand in need of, I look to the fulness, which he has laid up in Jesus, and from thence I receive it. I read my title to it, and I take possession of it, for nothing done in me or by me, now or at any other time, but only in or for the free grace of his Father and my Father. While I can live thus by simple faith I find I am enabled to go on well. The sense of his free covenant, everlasting love keeps my heart happy, and makes walking with him my delight. O that he may enable me to press forward, that I may hold my confidence, and the rejoicing of my hope stedfast unto the end! And why need I doubt of it, since he has me in his keeping? His love has bound itself to me by covenant engagements, which are my full security for what he has declared, 'I will never "leave thee nor forsake thee."

These desires, I am persuaded, are from thee, O Father of mercies. I could never have sought my happiness in thy love, unless thou hadst first loved me. O grant me then the desire of my heart. What thy good

Spirit has put me upon seeking, let me by his grace find continually. He has manifested to me thy perfect reconcilation to thy people through the life and death of Jesus. It has been given me on his behalf to believe this. I have therefore taken thee for my God and my portion, and I would so walk with thee as to obtain a growing knowledge and experience of thy love. For this cause I bow my knees unto thee, holy Father. O hear and answer the prayer of faith. Give me grace to walk with thee in love all the way to glory. I ask it in the name of Jesus: for thou art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. One Father, one family, one love. Thou receivest all thy children, whether in heaven or earth, into the same near relation, and embracest them with the same dear affection in thy beloved Son. O what a mercy is this! Blessed, for ever blessed be thy fatherly love, which chose me to be of thy family, and which has brought me to know that I am a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus. I thank thee for giving me the desire to live as such, and to walk worthy of my high calling. O grant me then according to the riches of thy glory, (out of thine infinite treasury of grace, and to the praise of the glory of thy grace) to be strengthened with might by thy Spirit in the inner man. He is the promise of the Father. All thy children have their new birth, and every faculty of the new man from him, and by the working of his mighty power they are kept, as well as renewed day by day: for without him they can do nothing. Of this he has thoroughly convinced me. I know I cannot call thee Father, nor believe in thee, nor love thee, but by thy Spirit.

O my God, strengthen me effectually by his grace in the inner man, for every purpose of spiritual life. Whatever he has engaged to do in thy children, let him do it in me, that through his presence and power Christ may dwell in my heart by faith. O let him continually discover to me mine interest in Christ, and

open to me the exceeding riches of thy love in him. Holy Father, let thy good Spirit abide with me, that I may know for certain Christ is one with me, and I am one with him, and may thereby be able to maintain constant fellowship with him—he dwelling in me and I in him. O may I thus live continually by the faith of the Son of God, depending always for acceptance with thee upon his atonement and his righteousness, and so may find the happy fruit of his prayer to thee—"O "righteous Father, I have declared to my disciples "thy name, and will declare it, that the love, where- "with thou lovest me, may be in them, and I in them." Thou didst hear, thou hast answered times out of number, the request of thy beloved Son. Lord God answer it to me. Let me rejoice in thy love, and find it to be the same to me, as to him. Let thy good Spirit root me and ground me in the knowledge of thy love to me in Jesus. O grant me to be deeply rooted in the experience of it, that my faith working by love may bring forth much fruit to thy glory, and I may become so grounded in love, as to stand unshaken, like a house built upon a rock, against every attack made upon thy love to thee. O my God and Father, my heart is naked and open to thee. Thou knowest the secrets of it. Thou seest how fervently I pray for the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. My prayer comes from a feeling sense of my want of him, and from a dependence on thy promise to give the Spirit to them that ask him. Lord, I ask. Grant me to be strengthened by him with every needful gift and grace in the inner man. Send him to manifest plainer and plainer my union with Jesus, in order to my keeping up communion with him: that having him dwelling in my heart by faith, I may be so established in the experience of thy love to me in him, as to be able to comprehend with all saints, what is that breadth, and length, and depth, and height of thy love. All the saints comprehend it. But the saints below less than they above. And some of them below comprehend more than others. I know

but little: O my God, increase my knowledge of thy love in Jesus. Whereunto I have attained, establish me; and keep me pressing forward for clearer discoveries of it. Help me to survey it, so far as faith is able, in its most glorious dimensions, and to praise thee for mine experience of its rich mercies. Holy Father, teach me still more by thy Spirit of the boundless freeness, and of the endless fulness of thy love—let me know thy love in Christ, which passeth knowledge. Although I cannot know it, as it is, my limited understanding being incapable of measuring the infinity of thy love, yet for this very reason let me be daily studying to know more of it—growing up into Christ Jesus by faith—abounding in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost—and increasing in the love of God. Holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, let me thus partake of the fulness of grace below, grace for grace, till I partake of the fulness of glory above—that I may be filled with all the fulness which is of God, with which thou hast promised to fill thy children in earth and heaven. O magnify thy love towards me according to its greatness, and not according to my deserts, or to my prayers. I know thou canst do exceeding abundantly above all that I can ask or think, according to the power that worketh effectually in me. Thy power engaged to act for me is the support of my faith, and mine encouragement in my prayer. It is an infinite and almighty power, which has graciously begun, and has hitherto prosperously carried on the good work in my soul. To it all things are possible. Lord forbid I should doubt of thy granting the petitions, which I have been offering up unto thee in thy Son's name. That which thou hast promised, thou art able to perform. O my God and Father, set thy power to work more effectually in me. Let the Spirit of might enlarge my thoughts of, and my faith in, thy precious love. Let me experience daily, how much more thou art able to do, than I have yet obtained; to give, than I have yet asked; to increase, than I have yet thought. And whatever in-

crease thou givest, may it draw out mine affections in greater love to thee, and to thy ways, and so be the means of bringing more glory to thee. For thy love in Jesus the whole family in heaven and earth is ascribing honour and praise. Accept my thanks, holy Father, together with theirs. To thee be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end. *Amen.*

CHAP. IV.

The believer goes on successfully, while he walks by faith in a constant dependence upon his reconciled God, and loving Father.

THE leading principle upon which he sets out is this. God is my God and Father. He is perfectly reconciled unto me, and my conscience is at peace with him through faith in his beloved Son. He loves me in him. He has manifested it plainly to me, and now my heart would cleave to him as my most tender parent. I would rest in my love to him as he rests in his love to me. It is entirely through the grace of the eternal Spirit, that I have been enabled thus to believe in the finished work of Jesus, and to experience the Father's love in him. By which means I have been satisfied of the love of the ever-blessed Trinity to my soul. Father, Son and Spirit have covenanted to make me an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ: From my belief and experience of these truths I have been enabled to choose God for my portion. His will is become mine. His appointed way is my course; and now I desire so to walk with him, as to maintain in my conscience, the peace of God, and in my heart the love of God. I do not expect any new title to those inestimable graces. My claim is good and valid under Christ. I would not disparage it by supposing that my close walk with God

was to make any atonement for my sins, or to be the least part of my justifying righteousness. I have these already, and perfectly too in Jesus. The enjoyment of them is the thing I want. I am seeking for more of that peace with, and love to, the Father, to which I am entitled in his Son. His fulness, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, is mine. A free grant of it has passed in the court of heaven, has been revealed in the record of truth, and I by believing have accepted the grant. I am in possession of its privileges, and am enjoying its blessings. On the fulness of Jesus I live this day. Out of it I hope to be receiving every grace, which I shall want for my safe and happy walk with his Father and my Father. Bless the Lord, O my soul, for what thou knowest and hast experienced of his abundant grace: which has enabled thee thus to resolve to walk with thy reconciled God and loving Father. This day thou art called upon to maintain peace with him in thy conscience, and love to him in thy heart; peace like his, flowing from the sense of being perfectly reconciled to thee—love like his, the happy fruit of his unchangeable love to thee. Whatever thou meetest with in thy work or warfare ought not to lessen, but ought to exercise and to improve those graces. Never forget that he is thy God—the God of peace. He stands related to thee in the dearest and most indissoluble bond of love. He is thy Father in Jesus. Keep the sense of this always fresh upon thy mind, and thy steps will be ordered aright. Nothing will be able to stop thee in the way to heaven, or to seduce thee out of it; but every thing will bring thee forward. Whilst thou canst maintain peace and love, thou wilt go on prosperously against guilt and self-righteousness, against the wiles and assaults of thy spiritual foes, against the world which lieth in wickedness, and against every inward and outward trial. The Lord being on thy side, all these shall work together under him for thy good, and they shall be the means of making thee walk safely in the way, and of bringing thee happily to the end of it.

The apostle has given us the whole plan in few words —"WE WALK, says he, BY FAITH, and not by sight." We direct our christian course by believing, and not by seeing. Faith is to us the evidence of things not seen, and the ground of our hoping to enjoy them. We believe upon the authority of God's word, that they are what he describes them to be; for faith, as a grace of the Spirit, consists in giving credit to what God says. If it be a truth proposed to the understanding, faith relies upon the infallible word, if it be a promise, faith depends upon the arm of God to make it good. And whatever he has promised, faith (when it is as it should be) does not stagger at difficulties, but rests fully persuaded, that what God hath promised, he is able also to perform. Faith looks at the word spoken, and overlooks seeming impossibilities: THUS SAITH THE LORD—that is enough for faith—full of satisfying evidence: for it knows, that to speak and to do are the same thing with an unchangeable God.

How many errors in judgment, and consequent mistakes in practice, prevail at this day, chiefly arising from confounding faith with its fruits; and from our distinguishing between the word of God believed, and what will follow upon believing it aright. Thus some make assurance to be of the essence of faith, others make appropriation, and many make it consist in an impression upon the mind, that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. These are fruits: what faith should produce, but not what it is. These are effects of faith working, and not definitions of the nature of faith. A believer should be exhorted to make his calling and election sure; for it is his privilege. He ought to give all diligence to attain assurance, to appropriate Christ with all his blessings to himself, and to be clearly persuaded that Christ loved him and gave himself for him. These are blessed fruits of believing. May God give his people more of them. But then the tree must be before the fruits, and the fruits grow upon the tree. Faith is first, and faith derives its being from believing the word of

God, and all its fruits are continued acts of believing. And when you hear of believing, do you not always think of something spoken? You cannot separate these two in your mind. Something has been said and proposed to you before your belief can be called for. If nothing has been said, belief has no exercise. Faith and the word of God therefore are related, as the effect and the cause; because faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. What God hath spoken in his word demands belief from all that hear it. When faith cometh by hearing it, then we assent to the truth of what God has said, and we rely upon his faithfulness to make good what he has promised. Assurance is this faith grown to its full stature, but we are not born six feet high. Appropriation is a very comfortable acting of faith, when a man is persuaded of his interest in covenant mercies: and, from what he then feels, can say, Christ loved me and gave himself for me; but he has not this comfort in times of heaviness, he may be walking in darkness and having no light, yea in the hidings of the Lord's countenance, and yet even then he may trust simply to what God hath spoken; which is true faith, and more exalted faith, than that which draws its evidence from its appropriating acts and its present experience, the more a man trusts to sense, the less he lives by faith; for sensible feelings are not faith. Impressions are not believing. I see the sun; I hear a sound; I feel an object: faith has no place in these instances. Its essence is believing and trusting what God hath spoken. If his word be believed, and by believing the conscience find peace, and the heart joy: These are joy and peace IN believing. They come from believing; are its effects; and no more enter into the essence of faith, than comfortable feelings do into the essence of man. He is as truly a man, when miserable, as he is when comfortable.

These mistakes should be carefully guarded against, because they are chiefly pernicious to the children of God; who are kept by them from growing up into

assurance, into appropriation, and into the sensible experience of God's love to them in Christ Jesus. They are puzzled—they are misled, by being told they have no faith, if they have no assurance, &c. They examine themselves, but cannot find any such faith. This discourages them. They are tempted to think they have no true faith, because they have not what certain persons talk of. But if they would adhere strictly to the word of God, and would take their ideas from it, they would see how simple and plain a thing believing is, and would soon be satisfied that they were true believers. Which conviction would have many blessed effects, especially these—it would put them upon seeking for an increase of faith, and upon expecting the proper fruits of faith. What nourishes faith, ripens them: for they cannot be produced so long as persons are doubting whether they have any faith at all. They would see how desirable it is to believe without doubt or wavering, what honour it puts upon God's word, what comfort it brings to them. And they would be waiting in the appointed means for grace to maintain, for grace to improve their faith, that they may be going on from faith to faith. While this was their end and aim, faith in act and exercise, maintained and improved, would bring in daily growing evidence of their being indeed partakers of the faith of God's elect. Living by faith, walking by faith, would demonstrate to them their spiritual life and walk, as plainly as natural life and walk can be demonstrated by any outward actions.

Here is great need, O my soul, to read the scripture, and to pray for the Spirit of wisdom. Read, pray much; lest thou shouldest err concerning the faith. Every error will be a stumbling block in the way of thy holy walk, and make thee tired of it, or seduce thee out of it. Let it be one of thy daily petitions, Lord, save me from all mistakes concerning the faith of the Gospel; and let the word of God, by which faith cometh and groweth be thy daily study. This is thy present business. Now set out, trusting to what God hath spoken,

and relying on what he hath promised. On this principle proceed, as it is laid down by the apostle, *Col.* ii. 6. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, "so walk ye in him." He is expressing his joy at his beholding their order, and the stedfastness of their faith in Christ, and he would teach them how to maintain their faith throughout their christian course. How did you receive Christ at first? Was it not by believing? Receiving Christ and believing in him are in *John* i. 12, supposed to mean the same thing. And in *John* xvii. 20, 21, our Lord says, that they who believe in him through the word are one with him. Christ then is received by faith, and by the same faith, by the belief of the same word of God, we walk in him, so as to be rooted and grounded and established in the faith. Our walk is in him, not any thing distinct from him; but is the effect of union with him. By him we live, *in* him we walk—rooted in him, we grow, as a branch in the vine—built up in him, we are fixed as a building on a sure foundation, and thereby we become established and strengthened in the faith. Every step we take is by faith, by the same faith, wherewith Christ was received.

He must be received always, as he was received once. There is no change of object, and there must be no change of faith, but the same continued trust on his word, and the same dependence on his promised strength. We never set out to walk with a reconciled God till we are one with Christ by faith, and know our union with him, and our walk is in consequence of this. If we go on at all it is by communion with him. We can receive only out of his fulness grace for grace, to make us willing and able to go forward. Our fellowship with him is in every part and in every moment of our walk, and this is as necessary as our fellowship with the air and elements of this world is to every thing that concerns our natural walk. Our wisdom to guide our steps, our progress in the way, our courage and strength, our warfare and victory, every grace and every blessing is received by faith, and is the effect of our com-

munion with Jehovah Jesus. We trust in his word, we rely on his arm, we wait on his faithfulness, and so go forward: for he makes good what he had promised to give us in our walk, which confirms the peace of God, establishes our hearts in the love of God, increases our faith, and thereby makes our daily walk more comfortable to us, and more glorious to him.

But if faith consist in believing and trusting the word of God, it may be required, how shall we know the difference between true and false, between dead and living faith. It may be known from the cause. The fruit of the Spirit is faith. He produces it. It is his gift, bestowed by his operation, continued by his power, increased by his blessing, and carried on to the end, by his never leaving nor forsaking his own work. And he makes it known to be his. He gives eyes to see it, and hearts to acknowledge it. Therefore the apostle says of them who have received the Spirit of God, that they KNOW the things which are freely given to them of God; by faith they both know the reality, and also taste the sweetness of those free gifts of free grace.

It may be known from the effects. Dead faith brings forth nothing. Living faith is fruitful. It produces a hearty trust in the truth of what God hath spoken, and a quiet reliance on the faithfulness of what God hath promised. It gives him credit for the finished salvation of his Son, and puts honour upon his record concerning it; whereby peace is received into the conscience, and love into the heart. Upon which there follows a settled dependence upon this reconciled God, and loving Father for the fulfilling of every promise, and this is improved by daily experience. He that trusteth in the Lord is never confounded. God is faithful. His promises cannot fail. Blessed is the man that trusteth in him. The Lord God will be a sun and shield unto him: the Lord will give him grace and glory.

As for the hypocrites, it is not so with them. The holy Spirit was not the author of their faith. It was

a fancy of their own, formed in their heads without any warrant from God. There was no life in it, and no living effects from it. There was the form, and nothing more. They made a profession, but never came to any enjoyment. They had no vital union, and therefore they could not have any real communion with Christ. They could not, as the apostle expresses it, walk IN him, and therefore in the hour of temptation they fell away, and came to nothing. Take heed then, O my soul, of mistakes. Examine carefully of what sort thy faith is. Bring it to the standard of scripture; and see what went before believing—see whether, thou dost now from thy heart believe what God hath spoken—wait for the effects. Dost thou so trust his word, as to take him for thy God and thy portion? Art thou walking with him? And art thou depending on him to bestow the promised graces and blessings on thee in thy walk? If this be thine experience; thou art set out well; go on. Remember where every thing relating to thy walk is to be had. The Father's love has laid it all up in the Son's fulness, and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to teach thee how to receive out of it grace for grace. He teaches by his word. With this in thy hand, and his light in thine understanding, read and study what he has promised thee for thy safe, happy, and holy walk. Take no step without the direction of his word, and expect at every step, that he will make good to thee what he has promised. Thou wilt very soon find the necessity of this dependence upon him; for ere thou hast well begun thy walk, thou wilt be called upon to exercise thy faith and put it to trial. Thou wilt meet with many things in thee averse to this holy walk; and many more to distress thee in it. The body of sin, the old man, the flesh, with its affections and lusts are still in thee. It is of their nature to be lusting, and to be always putting forth some of their filthy motions, in order to draw thee to walk after the flesh, and not after the Spirit. The tempter helps them all he can. He knows how to improve them to his own interest: and

from what is passing within thee, there be a sight and sense of sin, that if he can get thee to look at it in his view, he will act upon thy legal and self-righteous tempers, and will inject such vile insinuations as these against the Lord and against his Christ.—

How is it I am yet the subject of sin? It is still in me. It cleaves to me, as the flesh to my bones, and it mixes so with my duties, that I cannot perform them without it. I sometimes fear I am nothing but sin. When I attempt to walk with God, ere I set out, something evil arises within me, and stops me. Some proud unbelieving thought, some sensual affection, some worldly disposition, some corruption or other is ever at hand to hinder my course. What then must I think of myself? I scarce know what. Things, I see, do not grow better. I have been long hoping for it; but I find there still dwelleth no good thing in me: so that I am almost ready to question the truth of my grace, and it is with great difficulty I can keep up any peace in my conscience.

When the believer is attacked in this manner, (and who is not at some time or other) how is he to defend himself? Will his skilfulness in the word of righteousness, and his faith in the word of reconciliation keep him safe in the hour of temptation? Yea. By the grace of the Holy Spirit the lessons before learnt will be enforced, and brought into use. This is the time to maintain faith in the atonement, and in the righteousness of the God-man. Now it is to be tried in the fire; and it is put to the trial, that it may come out of it, like gold, proved to be sterling metal, and refined from its dross—better in every respect for having gone through the fire. The trial of faith is far more precious than that of gold which perisheth. It is therefore put into the furnace, that the believer may know the truth of it, and may experience the blessings of it. Faith conflicting with unbelief is a good fight—sometimes sharp; but always profitable. The flesh may be weak and ready to yield, faith may be hard put to it,

but victory is certain. During the battle the warrior is invincible in the whole armour of God. He takes to him the shield of faith, and holds it up against the fiery darts of Satan. He draws out the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and with it he defeats Satan. He consults or remembers a scripture suitable to his present case, and this being set home by the Holy Spirit puts an end to the engagement, and restores and settles sweet peace in the conscience. How often has he applied the following passage, which the Lord speaks concerning his true Israelites, *Jer.* xxxii. 38, 39, 40, 41. "They SHALL be my people, and I WILL be their God, "and I will give them one heart, and one way, that "they may fear me FOR EVER, for the good of them, "and of their children after them, and I will make an "everlasting covenant for them, that I will not turn "away from them to do them good; but I will put "my fear into their hearts that they shall not depart "from me; yea, I will rejoice over them to do them "good."

What strong consolation is there in this scripture! Every sentence has an argument in it, tending to establish peace with God, and to maintain it in the midst of war. How quieting and satisfying to the troubled conscience in his covenant purpose! "They SHALL be "my people, and I WILL be their God." They shall, because I will. My will shall make them willing. And in the day of my power, when my purpose takes place, I will give them one heart, turned to myself, and one way, to walk with me by faith, as obedient children with their loving Father. This I will do for them that they may fear me FOR EVER, that the fear of offending me may rule always and by all means in their hearts.

O what promises are these! What can weak faith require farther to silence its doubts? How great is the goodness of God to his children, who knowing their frame, and whereof they are made, for the good of them and of their children after them, has laid such a foun-

dation for their faith, that they may build on it and not be afraid, yea standing on it they may fight the good fight of faith, assured of victory.

I will make, says their God, an everlasting covenant for them, a covenant ordered in all things and sure by the counsel and oath of the blessed Trinity, the two immutable things, in which it is impossible God should lie: the mountains shall depart and the hills shall be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from them, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on them. My covenant was made for them, and shall be made good to them. As I live, saith the Lord, I will not turn away from them to do them good. I will never change my purpose, nor alter the word that is gone out of my mouth. I mean nothing but good to them. My heart is fixed upon it. And I will not leave the event to them. They shall not have the management of my purposes, nor have any power to defeat them. My will to do them good shall not depend on their will, or on their faithfulness, or on any thing in themselves. I have taken all their concerns into mine own hands, and I will conduct them all to the praise of the glory of mine own grace. I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me—they SHALL not depart from me. They are not the cause of their not departing, but I am. I have taken it upon myself. I will give them grace to walk close with me, and to fear me always. I have covenanted for all, the means as well as the end, and I will keep them by my almighty power, till they receive the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls. "Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good." This confirms all the rest. His purpose of doing them good, his executing it, his continuing it, his increasing it through time and through eternity, is a matter of rejoicing to the Lord God. He delights in it. It always was, and always will be the joy of his heart, his crown and glory. He will not, he cannot be deprived of his joy. Consider this, thou poor distressed soul, who art

in heaviness through manifold temptations, and ready to faint through the weakness of thy faith. Take courage. Thy salvation is safe. Thy Father, who is in heaven rejoices in it: he will save: he will rejoice over thee with joy, he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing. And his joy too shall be thine. As sure as God is in Zion, thou shalt return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon thy head, thou shalt obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever.

O what a discovery is here of the ever loving heart of our heavenly Father! What more could he promise in order to put an end to all strife in the consciences of his afflicted children! He has engaged in a covenant of peace to do good, nothing but good, to them. He has undertaken the whole of the covenant—what was to be done in them, as well as for them—to work out, to apply, and to secure their salvation. It is his unchangeable purpose, not to depart from them, and not to suffer them to depart from him, but he will rejoice in doing them good, and that for ever. This scripture, when understood and applied by the Holy Spirit is received as full evidence of the unchangeable love of God to his children, and then it quiets their troubled minds. They can believe God to be their God still in an unchangeable covenant, and they become satisfied that he has made them, and will keep them his people for ever. When they can thus mix faith with the promise, it then becomes the means of their resting on the faithful arm of God in the hour of temptation, and of their finding him still a God of peace: whereby peace is established in their consciences, and multiplied in their hearts. They learn to put more trust in him, as their perfectly reconciled Father, and to approach him with more holy filial confidence. The trial of their faith, sharp as it was, yet has done them great good. It has proved their peace and has confirmed it. They know now well that it is the peace of God; and they have been taught how to maintain it. War makes good soldiers. The

trials of their grace are for their improvement of grace. Their peace has been therefore shaken, like a new planted tree that it may take deeper and faster root. Being thus strengthened in the faith, and having the peace of God ruling in their hearts, they can meditate upon this scripture, and turn it into a subject of prayer and praise.

O gracious God and Father, pardon my thoughts of thy love to me in Jesus. I was tempted, and ready to give way to unbelief: but the gracious provision made in thy word was the means of keeping me in the hour of temptation. O my God, make the word, in which thou hast caused me to put my trust, more precious to my soul. Open still more to me the fulness of it, and put me into happier possession of its promised blessings. I praise thee, I worship thee for revealing this promise by thy Spirit, and for applying it by his grace with comfort to my heart. I now set to my seal, that it is true. It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation. Glory be to thee that I accept it, and enjoy the good promised in it. O Father of mercies, what am I that I should be made one of thy people, and should have thee for my God. This love passeth knowledge. O help me to understand more, give me to find more of thy covenant love. Make my heart one with thee. Lead me in thy one way, that I may fear thee for ever. And when temptations come, such as I have been in, grant they may bring me nearer to thee, and may be the means of my making use of what thou hast provided for me in thy Son's fulness. O let thy good Spirit abide with me to establish my faith in thine everlasting covenant, that I may believe thou wilt never turn from me to do me good. Merciful God grant me this grace in every hour of need. Thou hast given me thy word for it, and therein thou hast enabled me to put my trust. On thy faithful promise I would depend, and on nothing in myself. Thou hast shewed me something of my heart, and I feel it is revolting and ready always to rebel against God; but thou hast undertaken to put thy fear into it, that it shall not depart

from thee: therefore into thy faithful hands I commit it. Keep me, my God, by thy mighty power through faith unto salvation. *Amen, Amen.*

Happy trials! which have so good an issue, and bring forth such peaceable fruits. My brethren, account it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, if they lead to the exercise of grace, and occasion fervent effectual prayer. The believer thus tried, learns by practice the necessity of being at peace with God, and of maintaining it in order to walk with God. He is put upon studying the nature of this peace. He reads and meditates upon the revealed account of it. He sees it is a perfect unchangeable peace, secured to him by the everlasting covenant of the blessed Trinity, who have engaged to save him from all his sins and miseries, and never to turn away from doing him good. To this he trusts. He commits himself to the care of this covenant God; and he finds the promise true. In temptation he believes, and is delivered. In his warfare out of weakness he is made strong. He fights the good fight of faith, and he conquers all his enemies. He learns from trials to trust with more confidence. He not only maintains, but also improves peace with God. He depends on what God has promised to them, who walk with him, and the promise is made good, and he learns to go on more comfortably, and daily walks closer with his heavenly Father.

The enemy looks on him with malice. He envies his state. He once knew the heaven of communion with God, but he was lifted up with pride, and fell. It stirs up every infernal temper in him to see the happy believer, who had fallen like him restored to what he can never expect. Hence either as a sly serpent, or as a roaring lion, he never ceases to tempt. As soon as one wile fails, he has another ready. He is night and day plotting and scheming, waiting for an opportunity to make a seasonable attack. While conscience is at peace with God, and lives under the protection of the blood of sprinkling, he tempts in vain. But he does not despair

of success. He knows he has an ally within us in fast league with sin, and therefore he still hopes to draw him into sin by surprise or assault. In which he is indefatigable. He is never tired. He is always tempting the believer, not so much to gross offences, as to spiritual wickedness. Sly injections, legal insinuations, and self-righteous thoughts, are his most common temptations. With these he tries to shake the peace of conscience, and he forms his attack generally in this manner.

How can you be a child of God, and yet be as you are? There is nothing in you, for which God should look upon you, and love you. What have you? What ceasing from evil, what learning to do well, to recommend you to him? How can God love any thing, unless it be agreeable to his will, and what can he delight in unless it be conformable to his image? But do you live up to his will, and is his image perfectly renewed in you? Have you grace, and do you live up to it? Are you a christian, and are you like Christ? How are your duties? Just as they should be! You know they are not, and how can God be pleased with them, when you are not pleased with them yourself? How is your walk? Is it such as becometh your high calling—close with God, and at a vast distance from sin, and the world? How is your warfare? Is the whole armour of God kept buckled on? And are you always in the strength of the Lord a conqueror? Examine, and try yourself. Bring forth that one good thing, for which God should love you, and bestow his blessing upon you. You have no such thing. You have nothing to merit, yea, nothing to recommend you to the divine favour: and therefore is it not great presumption to fancy, that God will love such a one as you, whose just desert is wrath and everlasting destruction?

These are some of the depths of Satan. He knows, how strongly we are by nature attached to the covenant of works, and that if he can get the believer to look off from Jesus, expecting to see something in himself, for which God should love him, he shall then weaken his

faith and shake his peace. In this snare he has catched many a child of God. The temptation is suitable to the workings of our legal minds: it flatters our self-righteous hopes: and is vastly pleasing to the pride of our carnal hearts. No wonder then, so long as there is flesh in us as well as spirit, this artful suggestion should be sometimes received in this manner—Have I any thing for which God should esteem me and bless me? I wish I could discover some amiable temper, or some praiseworthy deed, which might recommend me to the particular regard of God. Indeed at present I have not any such. But I hope to attain it sometime or other. If I do but use more diligence, and watchfulness, and wait more constantly in the means of grace, perhaps I may attain it soon. However there can be no harm in trying. I will exert myself. And I hope the day will come, when I shall be someway deserving of the divine favour.

Here the temptation has taken place. As the serpent beguiled Eve, through his subtilty, so is this man's mind corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. The subtile serpent has attacked the liberty of the child of God and has darkened his understanding, and obscured his view of gospel grace. His eye is not now single: his heart is not now simple, in the finished salvation. He has been deceived into a legal dependence, and is giving way to a spirit of bondage. If he was left to himself, the enemy would lead him captive at his will. Satan desires to have him, that he may sift him as wheat, but he is not suffered to blow any thing away, except a little chaff; for the Holy Spirit, in whose keeping he is, dicovers and defeats the attempts of Satan. He brings to his mind, and enables him to make use of what he before knew of the doctrine of grace. The present trial requires the practice and affords occasion for the improvement of his former lessons. He had learnt from scripture, truths very different from the suggestions, to which he was ready to yield. He was therein taught, that the Father's love to his children

does not suppose merit in them. Grace does not follow works: for then grace would be no more grace. Election is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God, who sheweth mercy. For we are saved freely by grace through faith, and that not of ourselves; it is the gift of God. The election of grace is from mere love and sovereign favour, and has no motives to influence it but the good pleasure of the divine will. The objects of it are not the worthy, but the unworthy —not innocent, but fallen man—sinners, as such, no way conditioned or qualified—the lost, the helpless, the ungodly—yea the chief of sinners—open enemies and rebels against God. They are not saved by works of righteousness, which they have done, or can do, least any of them should boast: For boasting is absolutely excluded. Salvation was so contrived, was so wrought out, and is so appiled, that he who glorieth shall have nothing left him to glory in, but the Lord. No flesh can glory in his presence: for of him, and through him, and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever. *Amen.*

So soon as the spirit of God opens this view of the exceeding riches of divine grace, the believer sees his mistake. He finds that he was departing from the simplicity of the gospel, by supposing that the love of God followed merit, and that he should be loved more according as his walk recommended him. His eyes are opened. The delusion vanishes. The perfect freeness, and the absolute sovereignty of the Father's love as revealed in scripture, is manifested to him. He reads, and mixes faith with what he reads, and so recovers himself out of the snare of the devil. Some such passage as this is made the means of his deliverance, *Psal.* ciii. 17. "The mercy "of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon "them that fear him." Precious words! full of rich consolation to those, who have been tempted to seek some qualifications in themselves, on account of which they might be entitled to the love of God, and who have been distressed upon their not finding it. The holy

Spirit teaches such persons to look out of themselves, to an object exactly suitable to their case. He directs them to the divine mercy—a never failing spring of comfort—to that mercy, which reacheth from eternity to eternity—and which confers its richest favours, not for the worthiness of the receiver, but to the praise of the grace of the giver. Here he would have them fix their eyes, and expect relief to their hearts. Out of the fulness of mercy they may always receive grace for grace; for the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him. Every word is weighty. Meditate upon it, O my soul, and may the consideration of each lead thee to exalt that mercy of God, which is over all his works.

JEHOVAH is the word here rendered Lord. It is the incommunicable name, expressive of the incommunicable nature of the Godhead. It signifies the peculiar manner of the divine existence, which is in, and of itself, underived, and independent. O how happy is it for thee, that there is mercy in the self-existent Godhead, and that every perfection in it will be for ever exalted, even justice itself, for the exercise of mercy. May the Holy Spirit teach thee more of its nature, and make thee daily more acquainted in thine experience with its free grace and free gifts.

MERCY is that perfection in Jehovah, which disposes him to save miserable sinners: not a blind mercy, such as infidels dream of—but consistent with the honour of his law, and exercised to the glory of his holy precepts and of its just sanctions: therefore mercy and truth are so often mentioned together in scripture. God will not shew any mercy to sinners, but such as tends to establish his truth. Not one of his words can be broken, nor can one tittle of them ever fail. He will be justified in all his sayings, and clear when he is judged. He will be true and just, whenever he is merciful: his mercies being all covenant-mercies, and all given in, and through Christ Jesus. All men are by nature children of wrath, and only they, who are

chosen and called in Christ Jesus, are saved from wrath. These are vessels of mercy. His mercy is to them the love of a tender parent to his miserable children. He pities them, and determines to save them from their sins, in due time he quickens them, gives them eyes to see, and hearts to believe his love to them in Jesus, as the apostle witnesses—"God who is rich in mercy, for "his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we "were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with "Christ."

But for what reason, and upon what account, is he merciful to them? His mercy has no motive, but his own will. The objects of his mercy are corrupt fallen creatures, deserving his wrath, even as others; and therefore he does not deal with them upon the footing of desert. If he shewed them mercy for any fore-seen works of theirs, because he knew they would repent and believe ths gospel, and walk worthy of it, mercy would then be turned into justice, and would lose both its name and its nature. Whereas he saith unto Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. It is from mine own freedom and sovereignty, that I have mercy on any sinners. The cause is in myself, and not in them. I have compassion, on whom I will. It is from mine own mere love, that I have determined to be gracious to them; and my love has determined to save them, and the way also in which I will save them. I have appointed the end, and the means at the same time. Of mine own motion and good will I have resolved to give my Son for them, and my spirit to them, that they may repent and believe the gospel, and walk worthy of it, and so I may bring them through my tender mercies to eternal salvation. If this was not the case, how could the description be true, that mercy is FROM EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING. The mercy of God knows no variableness, nor shadow of turning. It is always the same. His fatherly heart has entertained thoughts of mercy towards them: for when he shews

them mercy, it is said to be according to the eternal purpose, which he had purposed in Christ Jesus—not for their merits, but for his mercies sake, not for what they have any claim to, but for his own name's sake. He gives all for mercy, and he would have all the glory returned to the mercy of the giver. What he gives, that he continues, and according to covenant engagements. Covenant mercies are sure mercies. "I will "make an everlasting covenant for you, says he, even the "sure mercies of the beloved." They have already been made sure to him. He is now in full possession of every promised mercy. And he has received them, not as a private person, but as the head of the body, the church. He keeps them for the use of his church-members. And as sure as the crown is upon his head, so surely will it be upon every one of their heads: for they are in the same covenant with him whose sure mercies reach from eternity to eternity. O what a view is here open to the eye of faith? Mercy always purposing, and in due time bestowing its free blessings upon sinners —mercy, without beginning, and without ending. The holy Spirit often calls upon us to behold it in this light: for he has not celebrated any of its divine properties, so much as this. It is frequently the noble subject of thanksgiving in the Psalmist's hymns. He has dedicated the 136th entirely to the praise of mercy, and going through the works of nature, providence, and grace, he ascribes them one by one to that mercy, which endureth for ever. O happy, thrice happy objects of it! What was in the heart of the Father of mercies towards you from everlasting, will be so to everlasting. His sure mercies are yours. His compassions towards you fail not. Whatever you want for your successful walk he has promised to give you. Be not discouraged then. He will supply all your wants, not for your sakes, but for his mercies sake. Are you sensible of your unworthiness? That's well. Mercy is for such. It can have no glory, but from such, as you.

Trust it, and be assured you will find that it endureth for ever and ever.

If a doubt should arise in your mind—it is true, mercy in God, cannot fail, but the exercise of it towards me may fail: I may so walk as to deprive myself of all claim and title to it. The Psalmist has given a direct answer to this ill grounded suspicion. He says the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting.

UPON THEM THAT FEAR HIM. This is their character: they fear their God. Once there was no fear of God before their eyes; but now they know him to be their Father. The Spirit of adoption has given them joy and peace in believing it. Hence a holy filial fear rules in their hearts, and influences their walk. While it operates thus; and as obedient children they fear to offend their loving Father, and desire to please him in all things, what ground have they to suspect that his mercy towards them should fail?

But may they not cease to fear him, and then he will cease to be merciful to them? No, blessed be God. He has made ample provision in this case, "I will put "my fear, says he, into their hearts, and they SHALL "NOT depart from me." This fear is one of the fruits of the Spirit which he produces in all the children of God. And they have it from him as a covenant blessing, which is full security for its continuance. It is one of the graces provided for them in Jesus by the Father's immutable love. "I will give them, says he, "one heart and one way; that they may fear me FOR "EVER!" The Holy Spirit is the guardian of this never failing fear. It is his office to put it, and then to keep it in their hearts. He has the whole charge of it, and therefore he has promised to abide with them for ever, that they may fear the Lord all the days of their lives.

How exactly suited is this scripture to the case of the tempted christian! What a full provision is there made in it for his safety and peace! God has mercy for him

and plenteous redemption—mercy reaching from everlasting to everlasting—always kind to the miserable. Mercy and misery are related as sin and salvation. There is not any thing, which a sinner can want, but mercy has a supply for him—a promised, a covenant, a never failing supply. It is a Father's mercy, which will never leave his children, and the same mercy will not suffer them to leave him. His mind is fixed upon shewing them mercy for ever and ever: and therefore he gives them his Spirit to abide with them, and to dwell in them. He abides with them, and they live: he dwells in them, and they walk in the fear of God. And by the supply of the Spirit they go on, till they finish their course with joy.

By meditating upon this scripture the believer is set at liberty. Though his faith staggered a little, yet the trial of it has done him good. He has learned an useful lesson, and gained much experience by it. His reflections upon what has passed in his mind are such as these—

O how foolish was I to forget the atonement and righteousness of my dearest Immanuel, in whom alone I have pardon and acceptance! How base was I, and ungrateful! I was tempted to expect that in myself, which I can have only in him. Vile legal creature that I am, I abhor myself for behaving so ill to my best friend. What good can I have, but what I first receive from him? I agree with the apostle, that in me, that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing. I am a very sink of sin, and of all uncleanness. I deserve mercy no more than the devil does. And yet I was looking out for some good quality in myself, on account of which God might be merciful to me. Whereas I am now satisfied he has no mercy, but in Jesus. All his mercies are covenant mercies; given from mere grace, and given to miserable sinners—not to make them self-admirers, but to humble them—not to lead them to think that they can bring God in debt to them for his own gifts, or for the right use of them, which is a

fresh gift—but he gives all to the praise of the glory of his grace. He delighteth in mercy; and my case required mercy. It was such as his mercy could get all the honour of relieving. Therefore I ought in the hour of temptation to have trusted in his mercy, to have hoped in his mercy in time of trouble, and to have loved him for his mercy in time of misery. Here should my faith have directed its eye, and not to any good which I have done, or can do. I should have remembered, how it was with the election of grace, and with the vessels of Mercy. God has one way of dealing with them all. Not by works of righteousness which they have done, but according to his mercy he saveth them, freely, fully, eternally. All is from his own good will, from first to last. Every motive, which inclines him to do good to any sinner, is not excited by what the sinner does or is, but arises from himself. And when he bestows any good, it never is deserved, but is entirely an act of sovereign grace, flowing from the Father's love, out of the Son's fulness, by the influence of the Holy Spirit; and is given and continued to magnify and exalt the mercy of the eternal Three. O how did I dishonour the divine perfection by giving way to legal hopes, and by supposing that the divine will would be governed by my more or less deservings? Where should I be, if I had my deservings? God forgive me. I see mine error. I am humbled for it, and I repent with shame and sorrow. I hope my past misconduct will prove a blessing to me: For it has certainly taught me to trust less to myself, and more to the word of God; to depend less upon my own doings, and more upon free grace promises. To the word which cannot be broken, I would trust in time of need. Whoever trusts in it shall never be confounded. This I know to be true by happy experience. I will therefore read, and hear, and study it night and day. By means of it the Lord wrought a great deliverance for me. My feet were almost gone, my treadings had well nigh slipt; but he sent out his word and saved me. I read

and believed, that the Father was not reconciled to me for the goodness of my walk, but that reconciliation was planned in the great covenants before all worlds, and was carried into execution by the life and death of Immanuel; it was his peculiar, his glorious, his incommunicable work: it was his sole prerogative to make peace by the blood of his cross. O that I may be enabled to maintain it the next time my faith is tried, and to put honour and glory upon the divine record concerning it. I read and believed, that the Father does not love me upon account of my walk, but for his mercies sake. His mercy was towards me from everlasting. He loved me in his Son—chose me—accepted me in the beloved—and all his dealings with me, since he called me by his grace, have come from the tender mercies of a covenant God and Father. I would not henceforth have one doubt of his being reconciled to me, and of his loving me perfectly in Jesus. My faith herein has been confirmed by my late trials. I have learned by experience to rely upon what God has spoken, for preserving his peace in my conscience and his love in my heart. Depending on his faithful word, and mighty arm, I would walk with him this day for the strengthening and increasing of those graces. This is the desire and prayer of my soul.

O Father of mercies, hear me for Jesus' sake. I acknowledge my sinfulness and unworthiness, even in my closest walk with thee. I am less than the least of thy mercies: yea, deserving the heaviest of thy vengeance. It is of the Lord's mercy, that it has not fallen upon me long ago, and I trust in his word, that it will never fall upon me. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of thine heritage? Thou retainest not thine anger against them for ever; because thou delightest in mercy. Glory be to thee for thine unspeakable mercies: for thou hast given me faith in the atonement of Jesus, by whom I have peace with thee my reconciled God, and by whom I have experienced thy great love to me. On

thee, O my God, is still my hope. I look up to thee the giver of those graces for strength to maintain them in my daily walk. I do believe in the sacrifice and righteousness of Immanuel, Lord help mine unbelief. I find it hard to preserve in my practice, what I believe to be true in doctrine; and therefore on thy present help I must continually depend, Lord strengthen me mightily by thy Spirit in the inner man against temptations. I am daily and hourly called upon to exercise my faith, and when thy grace does not hold me up, I fall. The fiery darts of Satan easily inflame me, when they are thrown at my legal hopes, false dependencies or self-righteous tempers. My shield, which should quench them, is ready to drop out of mine hand. I should fall a prey to the enemy, and the fire would consume me, if thy mercy was not over me for good. O my God and Father, strengthen my faith against the wiles and assaults of Satan, and against the workings of mine own unbelief. When these trials come, keep me sensible of my weakness, anddependent on thy promised strength, that I may meet them strong in the Lord and in the power of thy might. O let every trial teach me more of thy peace in my conscience, and more of thy love in my heart, that I may keep on in a steady course, walking humbly with my God. This is the work of thy good Spirit. I cannot preserve, nor improve his graces, unless he be every moment present with me. He is the giver, the continuer, the increaser of them all. O God the Holy Ghost, I therefore beseech thee to water thy graces every moment. Lest any hurt them, keep them night and day. Never leave me, nor forsake me, but what thou hast graciously begun that mightily carry on, in my soul. Temptations are strong, and I am weak; stand by me in the hour of need. And if my faith be tried with fiery temptations, let it come out of them like gold out of the fire. O thou almighty Spirit, confirm by trials, improve by experience, my trust in thy promised help. Let me go on from faith to faith. Keep up the confidence of my rejoicing in

my reconciled God and loving Father, that I may walk humbly with him in sweet communion, and holy fellowship in the way everlasting. Grant me these mercies, gracious Father, for thy dear Son's sake, by the influence of the eternal Spirit, three persons in one Jehovah, to whom be equal praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. V.

The believer orders his steps according to the word, walking with a free heart in the king's high-way of obedience.

MEDITATE, O my soul, upon the wonders which divine love hath wrought for thee and for thy salvation. Review the many, many mercies of thy past life; and consider, that thou art called upon to walk this day with THY God. What a privilege is this! He is thy God, and thou art his adopted Son. O what an high honour has he conferred upon thee! He has taken thee into the most noble family, yea, unto the divine household of faith. He has permitted thee to walk with him as thy Father. He has appointed the way, promised to be with thee in it, and every moment and at every step to be doing thee good. There can be no happiness superior to this on earth. Prize it: for it is inestimable. Enjoy it: For it is heaven begun. Walking with God by faith is present enjoyment of him, and will infallibly bring thee to the end of thy journey, to full and everlasting enjoyment.

Hold fast then the confidence of thy rejoicing. What thou hast been taught by the holy Spirit, depend upon him for confirming and establishing. He has enabled thee to see the glory of the finished salvation of Jesus, and to believe the divine record concerning it. Thou hast renounced every thing for the pardon of thy sins, but the blood-shedding of the Lamb,

and every thing for acceptance, but the Lord our righteousness. Thy faith herein has been tried, and the trial ended well. Thy temptations were manifold and violent, but they have done thee good. They have shewed thee the necessity of depending upon the perfect work of the God-man—of rejoicing wholly in Christ Jesus, and of having no confidence in the flesh. They have also been the means of convincing thee, that thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded then, but fear. And let thy fear of thyself lead thee to trust more in God. Rely on his faithful arm to maintain and to carry on his own work in thy soul. Remember he has promised it. Thy sufficiency is of God, and he has engaged to give thee grace sufficient for thee. He has undertaken, as a Father, to supply all thy wants, to deliver thee from all miseries, and to withhold from thee no manner of thing that is good. Thy salvation is safe. It rests upon a sure foundation, as sure as the covenant of the day and the covenant of the night. They succeed each other by the will of their Creator, and have not been out of course not one single moment. The ordinances of day and night are regular and certain. So certain is thy salvation by the same unerring will. While the belief of this rules in thy conscience, and in thy heart thou wilt be able to resist temptations. None of them will overcome thee, unless they separate between thee and thy God. Nay they will work for thy good, if guilty fears do not wrest the shield of faith out of thine hand. O beg of God to keep thee and thy faith in the hour of trial, that thou mayest experience his faithfulnes to his word. If thou put honour upon it, according to thy faith so shall it be done unto thee. Give it credit, and thy steps will be ordered aright. Thou wilt walk in love this day, as God hath loved thee. He will be thy portion, and the way in which he is to be enjoyed will be thy delight.

Set out then in this faith, with peace in thy conscience, and love in thy heart—trusting to thy God and Father.

Look up to him for strength to maintain and to increase these graces. And hope to receive it from his faithfulness. Now he has put a new song in thy mouth, even praise unto thy God, go on thy way believing and rejoicing. Jesus is thine with all his fulness. And he has promised thee a constant supply of the Spirit, that thou mayest have grace for grace to enable thee to walk humbly with thy God.

Mind then, thy walk is to be ordered according to his revealed will, and in his appointed way of obedience to it: For all rational creatures are bound to obey God. As soon as he makes known his will to them, it becomes their indispensible duty. His will is one, like himself, unchangeably the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever: For when revealed by the sovereign Creator it becomes to mankind a law, which altereth not. It binds angels and men every moment, in every point and circumstance. And its obligation will never cease. For all his commandments are sure, they stand fast for ever and ever. What he has commanded is as fixt as the sun before him. It shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.

It pleased the sovereign Creator to enforce this holy, just and good law by proper sanctions. Out of his mere grace he has promised life to obedience, which man engaged to perform: And he threatened death to disobedience, to which penalty man submitted. Thereby this law became a covenant of works. The promise was to him, who should continue obedient in all things: for Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man who fulfilleth those things shall live by them. But if he does not fulfil them perfectly, without one failing, he then comes under the penalty, which God had threatened to disobedience—"Cursed "is he who continueth not in all things, that are writ-"ten in the book of the law to do them." This curse draws after it all the pains and penalties of the broken law in earth and in hell.

Under this law of works Adam was placed, and

under it all his descendants are born. He and they are bound to keep the law in their own persons, if they would receive the promise, or liable to suffer the penalty, if they transgress. Adam broke the law of works, and we all in him; For in him all have sinned. We were all in his loins, when he fell, and forfeited in his attainder. By the offence of that one, judgment came upon men to condemnation. The righteous judge passed all the sentence, and decreed, that by the law of works no flesh living should be saved: For he has proved in his word both Jews and Gentiles to be under the law, and under sin, which is the transgression of it. Whereby every mouth is stopped, and all the world is become guilty before God: Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.

In the law of works there was no provision made for a surety; but it did not absolutely exclude one: Therefore it left room for the covenant of grace, in which a provision was made in the person of Jesus Christ for securing the divine honour of this holy law. He undertook to stand up in man's place and stead, to magnify the precepts of the law in this life, and to glorify the penalties of the law in his death, that not one jot or tittle of it might fail till all was fulfilled. And as he was God over all, blessed for ever, his life and death put everlasting honour upon the divine law. His obedience was of inestimable value, and his sufferings were infinitely sufficient to take away sin. Christ is now the end of the law for righteousness. He answered the end of the law for his people by obeying and suffering for them: And every one of them can now plead by faith a perfect fulfilling of all the precepts, a perfect suffering of all the penalties in the person of their divine surety. God the Father is faithful and just to his word and engagements with his Son: He has made known his will in the immutable record of grace, "that whosoever believeth in Jesus "should not perish, but should have everlasting life." How can he perish? Jesus died for him. He shall live

with God in everlasting life: Because Jesus lived for him. And this is the declared will of the Father, concerning all that believe in his only begotten Son.

Remember then, O my soul, that thou art not under the law, but under grace. Thou art saved from the law, under the form of a covenant of works. Thou art not bound to keep its precepts, in order to have life for thy obedience, nor yet to suffer its penalties for thy disobedience. Thy surety undertook to act and suffer for thee. He was to answer the law in its commands and demands to every jot and tittle. And he did. Whatever it required, whatever it threatened was perfectly fulfilled in the person of thy God and Saviour: And he has absolutely discharged thee from it, as a law of works. Thou art to have nothing to do with it in that view; nay, he has forbidden thee to keep it in hopes that thou mayest live thereby. The irreversible decree entered in the records of heaven has enacted—BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED. Thou art now to look upon the law in the matter of justifying and giving life: as a woman looks upon her dead husband. She is freed from the marriage contract with him, and may now give her heart and hand to another: So art thou freed from the bond of the legal covenant. Thou art become dead to the law by the body of Christ, who has espoused and betrothed thee to himself, that serving him in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter, thou mayest bring forth fruit unto God. This is thy high privilege. Thy first husband is dead: happy for thee, thou art lawfully married to another—Thy husband is thy maker, Jehovah of hosts is his name. The word made flesh has paid all thy debts, suffered thy punishment, wrought out a perfect righteousness, and won a crown of perfect glory for thee. O what a divine honour has he put upon thee! Thou art now one with Immanuel in a bond of everlasting love. He has given himself to thee, with all he has and all he is; and it is thy happiness now, not to be thine own but the Lord's —not to follow thine own will but his. The law of

thy Lord is liberty. As taught by his spirit, and performed by faith it is perfect freedom. Whilst thou walkest with him with obedience to it, and leanest on thy beloved every step, thou wilt find deliverance from all spiritual tyranny and bondage, and wilt enjoy the light of his countenance, and the love of his heart. When the Son has thus made thee free, thou art free indeed—free now thy heart is set at liberty to run with Jesus in the way of his commandments.

In this view, O my soul, thou canst look with delight at the most holy law. Attend to it closely, and study it carefully. In order to obey, as a christian, these following considerations should be well understood and digested: because under the influence of them every step of thy walk is to be ordered. O pray then for the spirit of wisdom to teach thee practically.

First that thy walk with God in the way of obedience is not to fulfil the law, as a covenant of works. Thou are not required to do this. Thou canst do it. Immanuel, thy divine surety, took it upon himself. Because it was impossible for thee, a fallen creature to keep the law, so as to be justified by it, he therefore came in person to fulfil it. He honoured its precepts by his infinite obedience. He magnified its penalties by his inestimable sacrifice. And this is thy justifying righteousness. Through faith in the life and death of the God-man, thou art not only freed from guilt and condemnation, from curse and hell, but art also intitled to life and glory. The law is now on thy side, and is become thy friend. It acquits thee. It justifies thee. It will give thee the reward promised to obedience. The law in the hand of thy Saviour has nothing but blessings to bestow upon thee. Thou art to receive it at his mouth, and to obey him: But not from any legal hopes of heaven, or from any slavish fears of hell! for then thou wouldst come under the covenant of works again. Whereas thou art not under the law, but under grace: Mind thy privilege, and pray for grace to live up to it. Thou art not under the law, bound to keep it perfectly

in thine own person, or in case of failing condemned by it, and under its fearful curse; but thou art under grace, a state of grace, through faith in the obedience and sufferings of thy blessed surety, and under the power of grace, sweetly inclining thee to love, and mightily enabling thee to keep the law of the Lord thy God. Live thus by grace, and sin shall not have dominion over thee. Under the reign of grace, the tyrant sin is always dethroned. Obey under grace, as freely and fully saved by faith in Jesus, and this will make thy walk easy and evangelical: Thou wilt go on with a free spirit, and wilt delight thyself in the ways of God, walking with him.

2. By faith, and not by sight. This is the great spring of all gospel obedience. Faith has an universal efficacy: for thus it is written—"Without faith it is "impossible to please God." He is not pleased with the thing done, but with the principle on which it is done. He looks at the heart. Hearing the word, or saying prayers, or giving alms, or doing any thing commanded, are not pleasing in themselves; but they must be performed upon a right motive, and to a right end. And both these come from faith. The apostle mentions the motive, which had influenced every step of his christian course, "We walk by faith, and not by sight"—we judge of our state by what God says of it, and we order our walk accordingly. We give credit to his witness of our being pardoned and justified freely by grace through faith; and we depend for the truth of this not on what we see, but on what we believe. We trust not on our good frames, or warm feelings, or sensible comforts, or to any of the genuine fruits and effects of faith, but we trust what God says simply, as his record: and therefore we walk in a constant dependence on the truth of God in his word, and upon the faithfulness of God to his word. Some promised grace we stand in need of every step; and we rely upon his word, which cannot be broken, and upon his faithfulness, which

cannot fail. Thus we go on, and we find the promise made good, according to our faith.

Such was the apostle's walk. And is thine directed by the same motive? Search, O my soul, and examine upon what principle thou goest to duty. Is it in the obedience of Faith? Dost thou take no step without the warrant of the word of God? Dost thou give full credit to what God says in it of thy state, as a justified person? And does this appear from thy dependence upon his faithfulness to make good every thing promised to them, who are in that state? Blessed art thou of the Lord, if thou art walking by this faith. O praise his holy name, who has thus highly favoured thee, and ascribe to him all the glory. So will thy end be right, as well as thy motive. True faith takes no honour to itself. It is an emptying humbling grace. Its spring-head is in covenant love, and it is given from distinguishing favour and sovereign mercy. It has no foundation, when given, but the word of God: nothing to rest on, but the divine truth: no support, but the divine power: and no growth but from the divine influence. What then does it leave a man to glory in? Whoever has it, has it all from God, and while he is in his right mind, living by it, he will be disposed to give God all the glory of it: Even for common mercies, as well as spiritual, he will live by the faith of the Son of God. Whether he eats or drinks, or whatever he does, he does all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God, and the Father by him. And thus will go on sweetly and happily, obeying, not from slavish fears or legal hopes, but

3. From holy love, which is the fruit and consequence of walking by faith. Faith worketh love, and then worketh by love. The faith of the gospel, as a grace of the Spirit, worketh chiefly by love to God, and to man for God's sake: for the gospel discovers the way of salvation, contrived by the eternal Three, fulfilled in the life and death of Immanuel, and applied to the sinner's heart by the eternal Spirit. Whoever is

enabled to believe the gospel will see himself an object of the covenant love of the blessed Trinity, and will therefore love Father, Son, and Spirit: for we love him, says the Apostle, because he first loved us. And faith in his love to us will make us that we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful. Love is very active. Obeying from love is very sweet. How active! How sweet is obedience, when the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, who is given unto us! He is an almighty agent. He overcomes the power of legal unbelieving workings, and puts a new spring to duty into the heart. He manifests the love of God in Christ, his free distinguishing love, the exceeding riches of it, and the numerous blessings flowing from it through time and eternity. In the sense of these mercies he excites gratitude, and puts it upon acting. This grace has a wonderful influence. "What return "shall I make unto the Lord!" is the devout breathing of the grateful heart. While the love of Christ constraineth it, all the affections follow him, and the soul delights itself in his ways. Then none of his commandments will be grievous. Nay, his yoke itself becomes easy, and his burden light: O triumphant love! How active, how sweet did he find it, who cried out—"I can do ALL things, I can suffer all things, I "am more than conqueror, through him that loveth "me."

And is not this, O my soul, thy happy case? O prize thy privilege, and adorn it in thy life. Walk in love with thy reconciled God, and out of love to him perform all duties, and bear all crosses. Remember, thou art not required to obey, in order to be saved for thine obedience, but thou art already saved; and therefore out of gratitude to thy dearest Saviour, thou art bound to love him and to obey him. Thou canst not love his person, and yet hate his will. "If ye love "me, says he, keep my commandments"—give this proof of it, keep in my way, doing my commandments. But whatever ye do, let it come from the heart.

Obey me, but see it be with a willing mind, and with a free spirit. When all springs from love, then my service will be perfect freedom. I would have you to do my will, but without fear; not for life; but from life; not that ye may live, but because ye live. Do it, as sons, and not as slaves: the slave abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth for ever. In this free spirit of adoption serve me, as sons of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with me. Stand fast therefore in the liberty, wherewith I have made you free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

To obey from life and savation received and enjoyed is sweet liberty. To obey, as the condition of life and salvation is bitter slavery: it is an intolerable yoke, because it is not possible any fallen man should so keep the law, as to live thereby. But the believer freed from this condition by Christ's keeping the law for him is in liberty, he is saved from the penalty annexed to the transgression; he is entitled to the life promised to obedience, and thereby he is delivered from legal hopes and from guilty fears. In this faith he walks on delightfully in the ways of obedience: for he is reconciled to the law through the grace that is in Christ Jesus: he loves it. O what love, says he, have I unto thy law! Because now I find it according to promise written upon my heart. And this is a

4. Motive to gospel obedience. The new covenant runs thus—"I will put, says God, my law in their in-"ward parts, and write it in their hearts, and I will be "their God, and they shall be my people: amd they "shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every "man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they "shall all know me from the least of them to the great-"est of them." The heart is by nature as hard as adamant. It is enmity itself against the holy law. But the Lord here engages to take away the stony heart, and to give an heart of flesh, upon which he will write the ten commandments; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart. The Spirit of the living God

will teach all his children to know their Father, he will manifest to them their adoption, he will reveal to them their Father's love in Jesus, and he will make their hearts happy in the enjoyment of it. Then the holy fruits of this love will appear towards man. It will work sweetly in benevolence, and effectually in beneficence. The love of God will open the contracted heart, enlarge the selfish, warm the cold, and bring liberality out of the covetous. When the holy Spirit teaches brotherly love he overcomes all opposition to it. He says to his disciples—"Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, for-"giving one another, even as God for Christ's sake "hath forgiven you." And he makes them kind to one another: they shew it by every good word and work. Thus by manifesting to them the Father reconciled in Jesus, and by enabling them to love man for his sake, he writes upon their hearts the two great commandments, on which hang all the law and the prophets. The love of God, says the apostle to the Romans, is shed abroad in our hearts by the holy Ghost, and to the Thessalonians, ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. Thus he engages the affections of the soul to the holy law, and inclines the inner man to love obedience. It ceaseth to be a yoke and a burden. How easy is it to do what one loves? If you dearly love any person, what a pleasure is it to serve him? What will not love put you upon doing or suffering to oblige him? Let love rule in the heart to God and to man, his law will then become delightful, and obedience to it will be pleasantness. The soul soul will run, yea, inspired by love, it will mount up with wings as eagles, in the way of God's commandments.

Happy are the people, that are in such a case! And is it not, O my soul, in some measure thine? Hast thou not been taught to love God, and his ways? Since thou hast been acquainted with him as thy loving Father in Jesus, has not thy faith been working by love to him, and to his will, and to his whole household and family? Remember this is promised. All the children of God are to be taught to know and to love their heavenly

Father. This is the very tenor of the covenant of grace, which the almighty Spirit has undertaken to fulfil. And he cannot fail in his office. It is his crown and glory to make good his covenant engagements. O trust him then, and put honour upon his faithfulness. He has promised to guide thee with his counsel, and to strengthen thee with his might in the way of obedience to thy reconciled God. What is within thee, or without thee to oppose thy walking in love with him, he will incline thee to resist, and he will enable thee to overcome. O what mayest thou not expect from such a divine friend, who is to abide with thee on purpose to keep thy heart right with God. What can he not do, what will he not do for thee? Such as is the love of the Father and of the Son, such is the love of the Holy Ghost, the same free, perfect, everlasting love. Read his promises of it. Meditate on them. Pray to him for increasing faith to mix with them; that he, dwelling in the temple of thy heart, thou mayest have fellowship there with the Father and with the Son. Whatever in thee is pardoned through the Son's atonement, pray the holy Spirit to subdue, that it may not interrupt communion with thy God. And whatever grace is to be received out of the fulness of Jesus in order to keep up and to promote that communion, intreat the holy Spirit to give it thee with growing strength. But pray in faith nothing wavering. So shall the love of God rule in thy heart. And then thou shalt be like the sun, when it goeth forth in its might, shining clearer and clearer to the perfect day. O may thy course be like his, as free, as regular, and as communicative of good, that thy daily petition may be answered, and that the will of thy Father may be done in earth, as it is done in heaven.

When all these things concur, what can be wanting to make the way of obedience easy and pleasant? It is not now an hard burden, impossible to be borne. The Spirit of life which is in Christ Jesus, hath made it easy. He has reconciled the believer to the law; for he shews

it to him in his surety, magnified and made honourable—magnified infinitely in his life—made everlastingly honourable in his death: so that the Father can get the fullest glory to every divine perfection, even to his justice, by saving sinners through faith in the righteousness of his Son; he can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly. The believer persuaded of this is reconciled to God. Being no longer under the law, as a covenant of works; but under grace, he loves the law, and walks with God in sweet obedience to it. He sets out, and goes on every step, in faith—trusting to the acceptance of his person, and of his services in the beloved. He does not work now, in order to be saved; but he works, because he is saved. And he ascribes all he does to the praise of the glory of free grace. He works from gratitude, and the faith of God's elect always does. It never fails to shew itself by love. The Holy Spirit wins the heart by revealing to it the love of God, and thereby draws out the affections after him. When the commandment comes, "My son, give me thy heart." The son is ready "Lord, take, it, and seal it thine for "ever." And whatever inbred enmity may remain against giving it to the Lord, the Holy Spirit has undertaken to subdue it. It is his office to take away the stony heart, and to create an heart of flesh, soft and willing to receive the impression of this grace. With the same finger, which once wrote the holy law upon tables of stone, it is now written upon the fleshly tables of the heart. And then the love of God, and the love of man are clearly taught, and effectually enforced. What a change does this make in obedience! Hard things are now done with ease. Rough ways are made smooth. Painful things become delightful. The labour of love is sweet labour: because the heart is in it. The feet run; the hands work: all the faculties are ready to exert themselves, when love commands.

O my God, let it be thus with me. Thou hast given me an earnest desire to walk with thee in the ways, guide me in them by thine almighty Spirit. Let him

abide with me, Holy Father, as the Spirit of adoption, that I may always serve thee, as thy reconciled child, not under the law, but under grace. I would gladly walk with thee every step by faith, and that faith working by love to thee and to my whole will. O God, give me grace sufficient for thy holy walk. Let thy faithful promise be daily fulfilled: write thy law still plainer in mine inward parts, and let it be more fairly copied out in my life. I want to love thee more, as thou knowest. O my God, keep my heart sensible of the exceeding riches of thy love to me, and let the growing sense of this increase mine to thee. In the strength of thy good Spirit enable me to overcome inward and outward opposition to my walking with thee in love. Let him strengthen me mightily in the inner man for every labour of love. From him cometh power to embrace and to cleave with full purpose of heart unto the ways of God—to love what he loves—and to hate what he hates. O thou blessed Spirit of the Father and of the Son make me willing, keep me able to enjoy the Father's love in his Son: and let it be a growing love, abounding yet more and more in knowledge, and in all sensible feeling, that I may run and not be weary, may be going on to the end and not be faint. Even so. Let it be done unto thy servant according to thy word, wherein thou hast caused me to put my trust. Let me have fellowship with the Father in his love through the salvation of his Son by thine influence upon my heart, now, henceforth, and for ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. VI.

The walk of the believer in the way of duty.

It is very hard to go on in a strait course and for any length of time. The hinderances are many. To understand the nature and obligations of duty, to enter

upon it with right motives, to perform it in a proper temper, to go through it without backwardness or weariness, not by constraint, but willingly, and to find the true end of doing it answered; these are great difficulties: but they will be removed in some measure out of the believer's walk; if he attend to what was said before of obedience in general, and if he be enabled to bring it into practice.

It cannot be too often repeated, that the true believer is not under the law, as a covenant of works—bound to keep the precept for life, or liable to the penalty of death. He is not under the law in this respect; but under grace. He is one with Christ, who kept the precept, and suffered the penalty for him, as his surety, and in his stead. He has put in his plea, and taken the benefit of Christ's suretyship. His plea has been admitted; and therefore he is in a state of perfect acceptance. He stands in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made him free. Grace reigns in him, and over him, and renders his obedience perfect freedom. He obeys, but it is all in faith. He works, but it is from a sense of the Father's love to him in his Son. Gratitude taught by the Holy Spirit influences his heart and life. His heart has the love of God written upon it, and his life manifests it. He serves God with a thankful mind and without fear, and cheerfully does all the good he can to man for God's sake.

The believer will never get on in the way of duty, unless he learns to obey upon these gospel principles. He will stand in need of their assistance at every step: For he will meet with constant opposition to them. The flesh will not come under grace. The carnal mind is always legal. The old man of sin knows nothing but working for life, and will not submit to any other way. Our sinful nature is altogether for the covenant of works, Jews, Turks, heathens, and nominal christians are all upon one plan: they expect God will be merciful to them for their doings. And the children of God are exercised with this self-righteous spirit more or less all

their days. Is it not, O my soul, thy grief and burthen? Art thou not daily plagued with it in thy duties? And though thy principles be very evangelical, yet they too often fail thee in practice. O beg of God then, earnestly and often, that thou mayest be cast into the mould of the gospel, quite evangelized in thy mind, and mayest perform all duties, upon such motives, as he himself requires and approves.

Duty is a debt owing to God—due from the creature to the Creator. The obligation to it arises from the absolute dependence of the one upon the other: and it consists in acknowledging this in the appointed way by a perfect and continual service of every faculty—the creature being entirely subject to the will of the Creator, and living in a never-failing conformity to it: for the will of God doth bind all men on earth, and angels and glorified spirits in heaven. It is an unchangeable law obliging for ever all creatures to obedience, not only on account of the matter contained in it, but also with respect to the sovereign authority of the almighty law-giver. And this obligation Christ in the gospel has not in the least dissolved, but on all occasions has confirmed and strengthened. How decisive are these words! "Think not that "I am come to destroy the law, and the prophets, I am "not come to destroy, but to fulfil," to fulfil the law in mine own person, as the surety for my people, and to put the love of it into their hearts, and to engage them and to enable them to practise it in their lives: though not for the same end, for which I fulfilled it.

Duty is always one and the same—a debt always due to God. But the debt of obedience being withheld, and the death of suffering being incurred, the believer, is taught to plead his discharge from suffering under Christ and his fulfilling of obedience in the righteousness of Christ. With this faith he has a delightful prospect of duty. God is now at peace with him. God loves him in his Son. It is his high privilege to enjoy the sense of those distinguishing favours. For this end he is admitted to walk with his God. What an honour is this!

Having received the adoption of sons, he is blessed with his Father's love, and is taken into near fellowship with him. What a happiness is this! "Son, all that I have "is thine, it is freely given to thee in Jesus, and thou "art now called upon to enjoy me and mine in thy "holy walk." Here duty becomes his privilege. It is exalted and spiritualized into a gospel grace. He is bound to it, but it is by the cords of love. The pleasing bonds of gratitude tie his heart to obedience, to a free, holy, evangelical obedience. He obeys, not as a slave, but as a son—not for fear, but because Christ has set him at liberty—not that God may accept, pardon, and justify him, but because God has done all for him, and will do all in him—not that he may have heaven for his obedience, but because heaven is reserved for him, and he for it. He therefore looks at duty, as greatly refined by the gospel. Every act of it, done in faith, is an act of fellowship with the Father and with the Son; and by the grace of the Spirit every act brings the Father's love through the Son's salvation into experience. He has communion with his God in all he does. This ennobles duty. It is hereby raised to a divine honour: For it is hereby made, to them who are in Christ, the highest privilege they can have on this side of heaven.

When the Holy Spirit writes the law upon the heart, he then teaches this obedience of faith. He does not abolish duty, but he enforces it upon right motives, and directs it to a right end. The same duties remain in the gospel, but not upon the same obligation. Law duties, as conditions of life, cannot be fulfilled. The judge himself has decreed, that by the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. Therefore the law as a covenant of works does not enter into the believer's obedience. He obeys, because he is freed from this covenant—not freed from doing the same duties, which this covenant required, but freed from doing them upon law motives, neither expecting the promised life on account of keeping the precepts, nor fearing the threatened penalty on account of not keeping them.

It is his privilege to obey, because he is saved. He works from a free spirit, and with a thankful heart. He does all his duties in faith. He is spiritual in them, acting upon the endearing motive of God's love to him in Christ, as it has been revealed to his heart by the Holy Spirit. He hopes for the acceptance of them only through the intercession of Christ: And after he has done them ever so well, he desires grace from Christ, to return him all his glory. Thus in every duty he aims at fellowship with God in Christ through the Spirit, and seeks to present an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

Whatever thou art required to do, remember, O my soul, that thou art under grace, and it is thy privilege to do it in faith. View the two tables in the hand of thy Saviour, and receive the ten commandments from his mouth. Happy for thee, Jesus is thy law-giver. His spirit will gospelize thine obedience. He will bring thine heart into it. He will set thee in the chariot of love, and thou shalt ride on prosperously: He will oil the wheels of duty, and they shall run easy and pleasant. Thou shalt be carried sweetly through duty, thy Beloved being present and conversing with thee in it: yea thy faith working by love to him will render fellowship with God in all thou doest, the joy of thy heart and the glory of thy life.

O beg of thy divine Teacher thus to spiritualize thine obedience. From him only canst thou learn the two great commandments, which are the sum and substance of the will of thy God. In the first his nature is revealed, and then his worship. He is the Lord thy God, Jehovah thy Alehim; Jehovah means the self-existent Godhead, and Alehim, the persons in covenant, Father, Son, and Spirit, partakers of the same self-existence, and divine glory, without any difference, or inequality. There can be no true religion without the true object of worship, and he cannot be worshipped, unless he be known; therefore it is an indispensible duty to know the Lord God. But how shall fallen man attain to this

knowledge? He lost it by sin, and he cannot by any reasoning faculty or power of his own recover it. It is a matter of fact, that no man did ever by searching find out God. And attested by infallible authority, that the world by its wisdom knew not God. There is no true description of the Godhead, but what is revealed in scripture; and it is altogether from the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that any one savingly understands what is revealed. He, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, opens the eyes of the mind, sets the object before them, and gives a clear idea of it. He takes of the things of God, and shews them to his disciples. He does not lead them into abstracted reasonings about the divine nature, or what the absolute Godhead is, but his lessons are useful and practical. He teaches the knowledge of the persons in Jehovah, as they are related to sinners in the covenant of grace. Through him the Father is made known, "Ye have received the Spirit of adop-"tion, by whom we cry, Abba, Father," *Rom.* viii. 15. Through him the Son is believed in: for no man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. He discovers the Father's love in the Son with its rich graces and abundant blessings as it is written, we have "received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit "which is of God, that we might know the things that "are freely given to us of God." He makes known the Giver, and the gifts; and he is received for that very purpose. He shines into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ. And this is saving acquaintance with the Father and with the Son; for hereby the understanding is restored to the image of God; and the new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

O what a mercy is this! What can call for greater praise? And this mercy, O my soul, is thine. Unspeakably gracious has the Lord been to thee. He has given thee the knowledge of himself. His image is upon thine understanding. His light is shining upon it;

certainly it is as great an act, as when he first commanded the light to shine out of darkness: for hereby I believe in him, I know him to be my FATHER. O precious name! The love of his heart, and it is infinite: the blessings of his love, and they are numberless, he has called me to enjoy, freely, of mere grace, of his own sovereign good will—called me to the adoption of sons, to the noblest dignity, yea to everlasting honour, to be a son of the most high God—God is my Father—my new birth is from him—that which is born of the Spirit is spirit, and has fellowship with the Father of spirits. Behold! what manner of love this is! No parent ever loved, or can love a child as my Father which is in heaven loves me. And I desire in the sense of this to love him, to cleave to him with full purpose of heart, and gratefully to devote all I have and am to his service and to his glory. O thou divine Revealer of this love enlighten mine understanding and influence my affections, that I may grow in the knowledge of my Father in Jesus: For,

In him the Father only is to be known. He is his Father, as our covenant head, and therefore ours in him. God is not a Father to any, but in Christ. The name Father respects Christ, as the first-begotten, and then all his seed. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, and depends for its adoption on the Father of their Lord Jesus Christ. He undertook to be made man, to live, and to die for the many sons, whom he was to bring to glory: and in consequence of his undertakings it pleased the Father to lay up all fulness of grace for them in the God-man, their covenant head. And it pleases the Spirit to witness of this fulness, and to enable believers to receive out of it grace for grace. Thus he reveals Immanuel to them. They know him, and are one with him. He is their Lord and their God, and by faith they live in him and upon him. Trusting to his atonement and righteousness they have peace with their reconciled Father, and they enjoy his love shed abroad

in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Waiting in the appointed ways they grow in the knowledge of the wonderful person God-Jesus. They see more of the divine glory of his salvation work, and by depending on it daily they enjoy more of the things which accompany salvation. Thrice happy are they, whose acquaintance with Jesus is thus increasing. Their happiness has a boundless subject. They may study on, and they will find in him new worlds of delight to eternity. O ye highly favoured, read and adore the wonders already wrought for you; among which these are not the least: "We know that the Son of God is come, and hath "given us an understanding to know him that is true, "and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus "Christ, who is the true God and eternal life." Blessed knowledge! they have an understanding given them, and they are savingly acquainted with the Father and with the Son by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Jehovah is their Alehim. Thus they learn the first part of their duty, which leads them to the

Second, Namely, to love the persons in the Godhead, because they stand in this most endearing relation to them. They love the Father, who is their Father in Jesus. They have not only heard of, and believed in, but have also enjoyed his precious love. It has been shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost! who has overcome all resistance to his love; yea has made enmity itself yield to it. Having purified the conscience by faith, he then purifies the heart: He pours into it a sense of that love, which gave his co-equal Son for them, and all the blessings in earth and in heaven with him. Thereby he draws out the affections in holy desires to be more united to the Father of mercies. It is the property of love to desire to be united to the beloved object. The Holy Spirit has discovered the object, and has given the desire, and he fulfils all the desires of his own creating. He teaches all the children of God to know their Father; and to experience his love to them in his Son, and then they cannot but

love him. He creates the new heart for this very purpose; and makes it sensible that the Father's love is all received through the Son, and therefore the Father and the Son are beloved with an undivided affection.

The Son is his office name. It should never be heard without putting us in mind of the wonderful love of our God in his undertakings. He covenanted to be made flesh. What a miracle of love is that! He engaged with his Father to be the surety for his people, to do their work, to suffer their punishment, and then God and man, one Christ for ever, was to have all fulness of covenant blessings to give his people. The Father has no love, the Spirit bestows no grace, but what comes through Christ. A believer is therefore taught in every thing he does to have fellowship with Christ. His safety, his happiness, his hopes of happiness to-day and for ever are blessings to be received out of Immanuel's fulness: for he is the head over all things to the church which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. And while the member is receiving life and sense and happiness from the fulness of the head, he will have fresh motives to love his divine Saviour. What can fix his affections, if gratitude to Jesus cannot? He has every thing in him, that can win the heart. He has beauty to engage love, blessings to increase love, glories to increase love to him for evermore. He is beauty without a rival. Whatever is charming in any earthly object is but a ray from him, and should lead to him; it is but a beam to point out the matchless graces of Immanuel. And so is the loveliness of heavenly objects: saints and angels have nothing beautiful, but what the love of Jesus has put upon them. He is the Lord and Giver of all their glory. How glorious then must he be; He is mine, says the believer, and my property in him makes him indeed glorious in mine eyes. Once I saw no beauty in him, that I should desire him; but now he is my beloved and my friend. I can see every thing truly lovely in my Lord and my God. Whatever else courts my heart appears to be

but a shadow: the substance is my Jesus. He endears himself daily to me by his numberless favours. I am always receiving out of his fulness some blessing, which makes him the centre of my happiness. Every look of faith discovers in him some new excellency, and brings from him some fresh kindness, and thereby engages my heart still more to its precious Saviour. And when I look forward to the glory to be revealed, when I shall see my dearest Jesus face to face, and shall be like him, and shall enjoy him, and in him all the blessings of the eternal Three for ever, O this is too big for present thought; yet it constrains me to give up my whole soul to this heavenly lover. Glorify him daily in me, thou faithful witness for Jesus, and give me continual reason to love thee with the same undivided affection, wherewith thou hast enabled me to love the Father and the Son.

The Holy Spirit is Jehovah, a person in the self-existent Godhead, equal with the Father in every attribute. His office name is *Spirit*; the idea is taken from air, such as we breathe, to denote his being the breather or inspirer of spiritual life. Every thing done by him in this character tends to holiness, and therefore he is called the *Holy* Spirit. His office in the covenant, as well as his co-equality with the Father and the Son, entitle him to equal worship, and to equal love. For he undertook to carry into execution the purposes of the Father's love in Jesus. Their fulfilment depends entirely upon his grace. The Son has been incarnate; he has brought in everlasting righteousness, and made the atonement of sin: the Father is satisfied with his finished work, and has demonstrated his acceptance of it: the God-man is now upon the throne of glory with all power in heaven and earth. To this the Holy Spirit bears witness. It is his divine office to apply the salvation of Jesus, and to make it effectual. He does all *in* the heirs of promise. The Father gave them to the Son, the Son redeemed them, but they are in the common mass of corruption, dead in trespasses and sins,

upon God, and he was ready to seek, wherever God was to be found. No hunted hart ever panted more after the water-brooks, than his soul did after God. His hope in doing any thing was to have God's gracious presence with him. And his happiness in it was to have communion with God. This is gospel duty. And what a glorious privilege is it! O that it may be my happy experience thus to meet God in all his ways, and to enjoy him in my daily walk. That thou mayest grow in this divine fellowship, consider, O my soul, some of the duties of the first table, and learn to practise them upon gospel principles. The first and chief is PRAYER, which consists in keeping up daily converse with thy God upon all occasions. This is the breathing of the new born soul. It wants to draw the air of heaven, and to live in its own proper element. There is a way opened for it unto the throne of glory, and the children of God may approach it with boldness: for it is a throne of grace and he that sitteth upon it loves to hear and to answer their petitions. He is *their* Father. "I go, says Jesus, to my Father and to your Father; "my Father himself loveth you; ask what ye will of "him in my name he will do it." This is the beloved object of prayer—a reconciled Father in Jesus—whose heart is full of tenderness to the complaints and miseries of his family—his promises are the declarations of his pure love—a dependence upon his fulfilling them does honour to his truth and faithfulness, and always brings down the blessing. The Holy Spirit abides with the children of God to teach them thus to pray in faith. He helps their infirmities in prayer, strengthens their graces, and bestows on them their comforts. He enables them to come with boldness, and have access with confidence. Whatever their Father has freely promised to give them in Jesus, they can asking faith, nothing wavering: for they know his promises cannot fail. They find them daily fulfilled, whereby their holy familiarity with their Father increases. He draws nearer to them, and they draw nearer to him. This their mutual inter-

course may be interrupted, but it cannot be entirely broken off. God is always disposed to hear, although the believer be not always able to pray rejoicing. It is still his privilege, although he may not find any great delight in it; but if he continue to make constant use of his privilege, his delight will return, and God will fulfil to him the gracious promise—I will make them joyful in my house of prayer.

Thus the child of God learns to love prayer, yea, to pray without ceasing. He lives under his Father's eye, and in a dependence on his Father's care for him night and day. And he has hereby as true and lasting fellowship with the things of God in his soul, as he has with the things of this world in his body.

O what an exalted privilege is this! How highly is prayer hereby ennobled! It is not a law duty to an absolute God: but a gracious intercourse with a covenant God.—Not practised that he may love us: but because he loves us—not to make us his children: but because we are his children. It should be performed always in this faith. If there be infirmities in it, such as wandering, coldness, or the like, we are to remember, that we are not heard for the goodness of our prayers, nor answered for the fervency of them. That which makes our persons accepted obtains acceptance for our services also. We and all we do are only accepted in the beloved: "For through Jesus Christ we have an access "by one Spirit unto the Father." *Ephes.* ii. 18. our access is through Jesus Christ. Trusting to his finished salvation we enter into the presence of the Father, and, guided by the Holy Spirit, we pray in faith. Whatever we ask in the Son's name we know that we have the petitions which we desired of him. This spiritualizes prayer, and puts glory upon it: because there is heavenly fellowship with God in it, with the Father through the Son, by the one Spirit.

These are some of the privileges of Christian prayer. Thou goest, O my soul, to meet thy God in it—to converse with thy Father—to call on him for the fulfilling

of his promises made in Jesus—to wait on him for his answers—and to give him his glory. O what blessed seasons hast thou enjoyed in this communion with thy God! How has he manifested his nearness to thee, and bounty towards thee! Hast thou not found his heart open, his ears open, and his hands open to grant thee the request of thy lips? And when thou hast not found such sweet fellowship with thy God in prayer, yet thy dependence on his faithful word has been exercised and improved. Thou hast left thy petitions with thy friend and advocate, trusting to that most glorious description of him in *Rev.* viii. 3, 4. "And another angel came "and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and "there was given unto him much incense, that he should "offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden "altar, which was before the throne. And the smoke "of the incense, which came with the prayers of the "saints ascended up before God out of the angel's hand." O thou great Angel of the covenant, thus present my prayers. They are nothing worth, but as perfumed with thy divine odours. Let them ever ascend before God out of thy hand with the smoke of the incense of thy sacrifice and intercession. Blessed Spirit of prayer increase my faith, that I may trust more to a prayer-hearing God and Father, who is always ready to grant every good thing promised to his children in Christ Jesus. *Amen.*

PRAISE and prayer go together. The prayer of faith will afford continual matter for praise. The one is a dependence on God for every promised blessing, the other is the acknowledgment of his having bestowed it. Innocent man had his heart in this sweet work. It was his happiness. Every breath in paradise was praise. The redeemed man has more reason. His obligations are far greater, than Adam was under, to his God—raised from his fall—saved from the guilt and misery of it—chosen and called to this salvation by mere grace—through faith a partaker of it—an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ, O what motives are these,

to continual thankfulness! And these motives are effectual, when the Holy Spirit discovers the things that are freely given to us of God. He makes us sensible of them and thankful for them: for he preserves in the soul a blessed poverty of spirit, an humble abiding sense of wants and unworthiness, and thus he lays a sure foundation for thankfulness. Every blessing is then received with a—Why me? what am I; and what is my Father's house, that God should deal thus bountifully with me? I must refer it all to the praise of the glory of his own grace. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed me with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ. All these blessings flow from the Father's love in his Son, and the Holy Spirit has discovered to me that boundless ocean of love, and has often refreshed me with its life-giving streams. He has made known to me the good pleasure of the Father's will, which he had purposed in himself, to choose me by his distinguishing grace to be one of his children, and through faith in Jesus Christ I read my adoption, and take possession of the inheritance of children. Mine experience of these blessings cannot be questioned, while I am receiving out of the fulness of Jesus grace for grace. O how great is my debt! It is equal to the eternal Three: so should my gratitude be. It is very meet, right, and my bounden duty, that I should at all times, and in all places give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God; therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven I laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of hosts: heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord most high. *Amen.*

May such as this, O my soul, be thy daily tribute of thanks! Consider what thou owest to thy God; how great are his favours, how many, how endless; and bestowed on the most unworthy. Review his goodness in giving thee being, and in preserving it. Remember

from how many dangers and pains he has delivered thee: what health and creature comforts he has vouchsafed of his mere bounty; and what a monument of his long suffering thou art. O what a miracle! that one, like thee, should be out of hell. Then put to the account spiritual favours, what blessing thou hast received from the Father's love in Jesus; what blessings thou art intitled to in him, not only in time, but also in eternity. Cast up the mighty sum, and say, How much it is. Canst thou tell the numbers thereof? No. It is beyond the power of the greatest arithmetician. If thou couldst write a figure upon every atom in the creation, thou wouldst want a new world, whereon to sum up the vast account: for thy mercies reach to the heaven of heavens, and they are also everlasting. Then consider to whom thou art thus indebted. Is it not to a justly offended God, who might have glorified all his perfections in punishing thee for thy sins? Whereas in wonderful grace he has chosen and called thee to the adoption of Sons. He is thy Father. This is the spring of all thy mercies. In love he gave his Son to finish thy salvation. And his spirit has brought thee to believe in it, and to enjoy it. This is the source of all thy praise. The object of thanksgiving is thy covenant God, who is related to thee in such a bond of love, as will bring thee under eternal obligations. Thou art therefore in all thy praise to remember thy relation to Father, Son, and Spirit, thy debt to them for that most blessed relation, thy growing, ever growing debt. Praise will pay none of it. The saints in glory do but acknowledge it. While they are praising more, the sum is increasing. O my soul, beg of thy God to give thee grace, that thine acknowledgments may be in some measure like theirs. They are crying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God, giving glory for the Father's love in Jesus, and for their experience of it by the eternal Spirit. May this subject be thine, more spiritual, more holy every day, till it be what theirs is, perfect and without intermission.

Since it is thy privilege, O my soul, to pray to thy

covenant God and to praise him for covenant mercies, then thou wilt highly prize the holy SCRIPTURES; because without them thou canst not know what to pray for, nor what is indeed a mercy. Thy faith has nothing to stand upon but the word of God, and nothing to praise him for, but mercies therein promised, and by believing received. O how dear then should his word be to thee; how greatly studied, how diligently heard, that by it thou mayest grow in every grace, which is needful for thy holy walk with God. It is the appointed means by which the Holy Spirit acts. It is his great instrument in beginning and carrying on spiritual life. He opens the understanding to know the scriptures, he inclines the will and the affections to receive them in the love of the truth, and he influences the whole man to submit to live under the obedience of faith. Whatever strength, victory, comfort, or blessing of any kind he bestows, it comes by obeying the truth through the Spirit. So that thou canst not go on in thy walk with God but by constant and believing use of the scriptures. They should be thy study night and day, heard and read carefully, mixed with faith, treasured up in thy memory, received into thy heart, and brought into thy life, and all by the teaching of the Holy Ghost, in order to thine enjoyment of the promised blessings of the Father's love through the Son's salvation. Thus the word will be the means of thy maintaining fellowship with the blessed Trinity. By mixing faith with it thou wilt be constantly receiving from them covenant mercies; and so thou wilt go forward. Thy steps will be ordered aright according to the word, and thy way will be prosperous.

Consider then, O my soul, whether thou art making this use of the scriptures. Dost thou find the means of thy growth in divine knowledge, in faith and love? Do they really promote thy communion with God, and on that account are they daily more thy study, and thy delight? Never think of hearing or reading them without praying for the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that

they may be the means of keeping up fellowship with thy Father in Jesus. For this end they were revealed, and if this end be not answered they profit thee nothing. Make it then thy constant practice—before hearing, to pray for a spiritual appetite, that as new born babes desire milk, so thou mayest hunger and thirst for the good word of life—in hearing, beg of God, that thou mayest feed upon the word and digest it, and thine inward man may be nourished up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine—after hearing, pray for a sanctified memory to treasure up for use, what thou hast learnt, that as occasion shall serve it may be realized; and brought into practice, thy life and conversation being cast into the mould of the word. With the same dependence on thy divine Teacher read, as well as hear, the scriptures. Meditate on them. Converse about them, expecting to find them able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus, and as thy faith in him increases, able to bring in richer experience of thy Father's love in him.

How sweet is prayer, how delightful is praise, how blessed is hearing and reading the word, when these are the means of meeting and conversing with God! His presence puts the highest honour upon them, and exalts duty into a royal privilege: for he is present as a Father with his children. O what a dignity is it to have God for our Father! What an happiness to have free fellowship with him in this dearest relation? In thy daily hearing and reading his word, observe, O my soul, what is spoken of this holy fellowship; and seek to maintain it, and to improve it in every appointed way, particularly in keeping the command of thy dying friend.

Do this in remembrance of me. When his disciples meet together for this purpose, then place the whole dependence of thy heart upon thy crucified Saviour. Considering the infinite and everlasting efficacy of the sacrifice of his body and soul to take away sin, draw near in faith to feast upon it: for his flesh is meat in-

deed, and his blood is drink indeed. Look well to the end of the institution. It was not only to remind thee of, but also to convey to thee, all the blessings of that one offering, which perfects for ever. It was to teach thee, that thy spiritual life, and every grace and comfort of it are as dependant upon Christ crucified, as the life of thy body is upon the meat and drink of this world. Thy life comes from his death. Thy life is nourished by feeding upon Christ thy passover, who was sacrificed for thee. He intended by the bread to point out unto thee his body, and by the wine his blood —by eating and drinking them, thy taking and living upon him—by thy bodily support received from them, the nourishment of thy soul by eating his flesh and drinking his blood. He would have thee to look through the signs to the things sanctified. Thou art not to rest in the outward act, but to rest in the promise in the word of God. Thy faith is not to be exercised about the Lord's supper as a duty; but it is to be exercised upon his word; and what he has therein promised to make it, that thou art to expect in taking it. He appointed it to be the means of communicating with him, and of thy enjoying fellowship with him in his sufferings. It is a spiritual believing act, in which thou art invited to partake of the paschal lamb. It is the Lord's passover; and will certainly answer every purpose, for which he instituted it. He appointed it to be the means of safety from the destroyer, of deliverance from bondage, of free and full forgiveness of all sins, of an happy passage through the Red Sea, and of the everlasting possession of the promised inheritance. For these gracious purposes the Father's love gave his Son to be a lamb slain, and then a lamb feasted on: and the Holy Spirit makes it a feast indeed. It is to the believing receiver spiritually, whatever the passover was to the Jews on their coming out of Egypt. It is a communion with the blessed Trinity—with the Father for providing such a banquet of love—with the Son for giving himself to be a lamb slain, and to be a spiritual repast to

his people in earth and in heaven—with the Holy Spirit for rendering the bread which is broken the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup of blessing the communion of the blood of Christ, communion signifies union with—the believer united to Christ—one with Christ—a member in his body, lives in him, and on him, has communications of life, nourishment, strength, comfort, &c. as the members have from their union with the head. He has a real inward fellowship with Jesus, in his cross and passion, in his resurrection and ascension, in his intercession and sitting at the right hand of the majesty on high. He communicates now with Jesus in all the blessings of his Father's love, and will communicate with him in all his Father's glory. O what a privilege is the Lord's Supper, when it is thus the means of communion with the Son, and with his Father through the Spirit! What an honour is it to be admitted to a feast instituted by the Lamb of God, and for the enjoyment of the love of God! What a blessing is it to sit down now to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and to partake by faith of its spiritual realities and delights! There is nothing beyond this upon earth, and it has sometimes been to the believing receiver a foretaste of heaven. Yes, blessed be God, it has been, even to thee, O my soul, unworthy as thou art of one crumb from the Master's table, a feast of fat things, of wines kept, even of fat things full of marrow, of wines kept, and well refined. And when thou hast not been so highly feasted, yet thou hast enjoyed solid communion. Partaking of the bread and wine according to the Lord's institution, and depending on the Lord's promise, thou hast been fed and nourished at his table. The virtue of the Spirit has been put forth in thy heart, and thou hast as truly by faith eat the flesh, and drank the blood of the Son of man as thou didst eat the bread and drink the wine. It was strictly speaking a *communion:* being united to Christ, thou wast a partaker of Christ, and hadst fellowship with him in his life and death. O pray for more of this.

Beg of the Holy Spirit to increase thy communion with Jesus, that thou mayest live more in him and on him, and thereby enjoy more of the love of thy heavenly Father. Plead his promise, and expect the fulfilling of it: "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood "dwelleth in me, and I in him; As the living Father "hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that "eateth me, even he shall live by me," *John* vi. 56, 57.

Viewing the duties of the first table in this light, how exalted are they, and spiritual! What a glory does it put upon them, that the believer has fellowship with the eternal Three, and in prayer, and praise, in hearing and reading the word, and at the Lord's Supper he enjoys their covenant mercies, partaking of them now as really by faith, as ever he will by sense in heaven! The law written and engraven in stones was glorious, but the law thus written upon his heart excelleth in glory. The two first tables of stone were broken, the other two are lost; but no time shall deface the writing of the Holy Spirit. The new heart, turned in love to God, shall keep his impression for ever. Faith should rest securely upon this: because he has undertaken to abide for ever with his own people, that the purposes of the Father's love, and the blessings of the Son's salvation may be always enjoyed by them. In remembrance of this great truth they keep the

LORD'S-DAY. They rest on it from labour, declaring thereby their belief of the rest, which the eternal Three have provided in Jesus—a rest in their souls—given without their labour and pains—secured to them by covenant—kept for them by almighty power—a sabbath remaining for the people of God, into which they shall as certainly enter, as Jesus their forerunner is entered. Sabbath signifies a day of rest. It was set apart in memory of God's finishing the works of the first creation: and is observed now in memory of his finishing the works of the new creation. The end for which the world was made will be answered soon; and then it, and all the works therein shall be burnt up, and the

place of them found no more: but the glorious work of the God-man shall endure for ever. In honour of this greatest work of God we keep the Lord's-day. It is his Sabbath—a day eternally famous for his finishing the work of salvation, and entering into his rest. "And "we who have believed, says the apostle, do enter into "rest." We do enter into it now by faith, and we share with him in his Sabbath. The atonement which he made, the righteousness which he wrought out, the victory which he obtained, the works which he perfected for ever, and the glory which he now inherits, we enjoy at present by believing, and enter upon the possession of them. According to our faith, such is our rest. He that believes without doubt or wavering in the finished salvation of Jesus, he will have the peace of God ruling in his conscience, he will experience the perfect love of God to him, which will make him rest in his love to God, and then he will delight himself in the ways of God. This is the Christian sabbath. It consists in resting upon Jesus, and in depending upon his having finished the works of redemption, and then in living upon them for our souls, as much as we do upon the works of creation for our bodies.

Sweet is the day of rest, spent in this holy employment. Happy time! set apart for spiritual intercourse with God, and consecrated for keeping up fellowship with him in his fatherly love in Jesus, and for receiving from him communications of his graces and blessings. Thrice happy day! in which this fellowship is kept up and these graces and blessings are enjoyed. By this heavenly converse the inward man is renewed with growing strength: his faculties are enlarged; and their happiness is increased. By which means he comes nearer to the spiritual rest of the heavenly sabbath. He calls it his delight, holy of the Lord, honourable; because the end of its institution is answered to him, and he has on it happy communion with his God. When he draws near to God in his appointed ways, he finds God in them, and experiences his loving kindness, which is

better than life itself. Blessed is the man, who is thus highly favoured. He enters within the vail into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and finds a most loving Father upon a throne of grace. In every service on the Lord's day, he seeks a more intimate acquaintance and more spiritual fellowship with him. His very heart is engaged in this work. His soul thirsteth, and his very flesh longeth to meet God, as he has met him in the sanctuary. Therein he has found communications of grace, which have rendered the ordinances delightful indeed. He rejoices in hopes of meeting God and of drawing near to him in prayer, of praising him still more and more for his abundant mercies, of hearing the reviving sound of gospel grace, and of everlasting love, and of receiving it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, and of sitting down to the banquet of heaven in communion with Christ crucified, through him partaking of the Father's love by the Spirit's influence. Blessed is he of the Lord, who is thus spiritual in sabbath duties. By keeping up constant communion with God in them his blessedness is increasing. He is already in possession of the same things which his elder brethren are enjoying in heaven; and he will become more heavenly minded, while he maintains daily fellowship with the eternal Three in their covenant offices and blessings.

Consider, O my soul, that these privileges are thine. Look well to thine improvement of them. Remember, thou art already by believing entered into rest. Thy sabbath is begun—a day whose sun shall never set—whose glory shall shine brighter for evermore. May thine enjoyment of this rest, which is so glorious, be growing, until thou attain to the eternal sabbath. O pray thy Lord to lift up the light of his countenance upon thee, to vouchsafe thee more of the love of his heart and more of the bounty of his hand, more communion with him, and more communications from him, that thou mayest be growing up into Jesus in all things,

and be ready, whenever he calls thee, to enter in with him into his perfect rest.

Thus the first table duties are kept. By the teaching of the Holy Spirit they become gospel privileges. When he makes us new creatures in Christ Jesus, then we take the Three in Jehovah to be our God. We know our Father in Christ, believe in him and love him. We will have no other Gods, but him. We give his honour to none, his name to none, our time and heart-service to none, but him. His love made known to us, engages our affections, and puts us upon seeking fellowship with him in all appointed ways. Yea, the more we know of his perfect love to us, the more we are disposed to love him, and to witness it in every thing we do. It becomes our study to walk before him in all well pleasing; for we find it our happiness. Whether we eat or drink, rise up, or lie down to rest, follow our worldly calling, or have any dealings with men, we endeavour to do all in faith. This makes the common things of life spiritual actions: because in them we maintain intercourse with God. This is indeed the heavenly temper of the children of the most High. They seek the presence and the blessings of their Father in Jesus in all they do. They are taught to live in a simple dependence upon him. They acknowledge this dependence by looking up to him for every thing needful, and having received it by giving him all his glory. Then they are returned in heart and life to that God, from whom they had departed by unbelief.

Most blessed return: For now the old sinful nature with its affections and lusts is pardoned, and thereby they have lost their dominion. They have no right to exercise their tyranny any longer. The base selfish tempers, which rendered a man a plague to others, and often a burden to himself, are dethroned. The pardoning them is subduing them. These always go together. They kept the understanding in darkness, but now it is light in the Lord. They blinded the conscience and made it insensible, but now it has seen its guilt, and

has found peace with God. The heart was engaged in their service, but now God has set up his throne in it, and sweetly rules over the affections. Thus a free pardon brings a man into liberty. He ceases to be a slave to his selfish tempers. A full pardon brings him full victory over them; for then he has the blood of Jesus to cleanse him from all sin, and the Spirit of Jesus to subdue all sin. He is taken into the protection of Christ, and is his free-man. None shall make him a slave. The Spirit of Christ rules in him, and makes him willing to live under the reign of grace: He dwells and abides with him to preserve in his heart the love of God, and to produce in it the proper fruits of that love towards men. Thus he brings the sinner to love thee.

DUTIES OF THE SECOND TABLE, which our Lord has summed up in one sentence. "Thou shalt love thy "neighbour as thyself." This love was lost at the fall. Nothing is in mankind by nature but selfishness. He is a slave to divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. Every age has felt this malady, and complained of it. But no human means have been able to remedy it. Fine systems of ethics, and beautiful plans of natural religion have been tried; the aid of strong reasoning, assisted with the forces of logic and metaphysics, has been called in, but all in vain. Selfish tempers broke through their cobweb arguments, and sported with their imaginary bonds. Sometimes they polished the outside a little, and made a man a courtier: he looked, and smiled, and seemed to love; but they did not reach his heart. This is the prerogative of the Lord God. He only, who made us creatures, can make us new creatures. And until we are new born of God, we have every thing in us opposite to brotherly love. But when we are born of the Spirit, then we are taught of him to love one another. He teaches it, and he enforces it. His lessons are entirely practical. He not only informs the understanding, but also influences the affections. Having disposed and enabled the heart to love God, he evidences

the power of this divine love by its genuine fruits towards men. These are inseparable from their cause. Divine love is never without brotherly love; for so far as the love of God is felt, it produces loving tempers. It opens and enlarges the heart, as the warm beams of the sun open and expand the flowers. The agency, which performs this, is almighty. The Holy Spirit having begotten the new nature writes upon it the law of love. He keeps it willing to resist, and makes it able to overcome the selfish tempers of the old man. The apostle Peter has given us a delightful description of the manner of the divine proceeding herein, 1 *Pet.* i. 21, 22, 23. "Christ was manifest in those last "times for you, who by him do believe in God, that "raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, "that your faith and hope might be in God: seeing "ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth "through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the bre-"thren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart "fervently; being born again, not of corruptible seed, "but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth "and abideth for ever." The Christians to whom he writes were partakers of the new birth, they were born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible. The Holy Spirit was the author of their regeneration. The word of truth was the means, which he made use of, they obey the truth through the Spirit. By believing it they were begotten again to a lively faith and hope in God. They evidenced their love to him by their unfeigned love of the brethren; they love him that begat, and loved those also that were begotten of him. From whence it appears, that the love of the brethren is not in the heart by nature, but is from the grace of the Holy Spirit. He gives a new heart, and he sheds abroad in it the love of God, which by his influence works mightily in opposing and overcoming our selfish tempers, and in establishing the practice of second table duties. These spring from divine love. The Holy Spirit joins them together, as the cause and the effect.

He teaches no man to love God without teaching him also to love the brethren. He rains and shines upon the tree of love: under his cultivation it thrives: He brings forth the sweet and loving tempers of the new man, and they bear fruit abundantly. And blessed fruit it is: for God has great glory from it, and men much good. Love thinketh, speaketh, and doeth no evil. Yea, it cannot be in the heart, without a desire to do good to all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith—to do good to their bodies and souls—to give honour to whom honour is due—to preserve their lives—their property—their chastity—their good name—to bear no false witness, but always to speak the truth of them—and to covet none of their blessings, either spiritual or temporal. This is morality—christian morality—for it is learnt no where but in the school of Christ. What his Spirit teaches, he enables also to perform, which moral persuasion cannot. He gives a will and a power to put off the selfish tempers of the old man, and to put on the loving graces of the new man: these graces he preserves by his almighty agency, and calls them into daily practice, through faith working by love—love to God from a sense of his infinite goodness—and love to man for God's sake. Thus the second table duties, when done out of gratitude to God for his infinite mercies, help the believer on in his walk heavenwards, and are the means of maintaining constant fellowship with his God.

Is this, O my soul, thy happy experience? Examine carefully. What are thy tempers? What is thy practice, with respect to loving thy neighbour as thyself? There is great complaint in the world of the want of brotherly love. And no wonder. It cannot be in them, who are wholly lovers of themselves. But may not the same complaint be taken up of the household and family of faith? Are not the children of the same Father deficient in brotherly love? Yes, they are. Too, too often they live below their privilege, and thereby bring great dishonour upon God, and give great offence

to men. Be humbled, O my soul, for thine own failing. Remember, what reason thou hast to mourn for the infirmities of thy love—how barren it is in its proper fruits—how cold, when it should be fervent—how polluted, when it should be pure—how covetous, when it should be liberal. Hast thou duly attended to the cause of this, and does it grieve thee to thy heart? Wouldst thou be saved from self-love, and increase in brotherly love, yet more and more? Since this is thy case meditate carefully upon what is promised, and pray earnestly for what is provided, for the subduing of those tempers which are enemies to brotherly love, and which, if not subdued, will hinder thee from enjoying the love of God in thy walk with him.

First, Consider thy state. Thou art a pardoned sinner, not under the law, but under grace—freely, fully saved from the guilt of all thy sins. There is none to condemn, God having justified thee. He sees thee in his Son, washed in his blood, clothed in his righteousness; and he embraces him and thee, the head and the members with the same affection.

Secondly, Consider what is promised to them who are in Christ. Sin shall not have dominion over them. Pardoned sin shall not reign. It cannot, for it is dethroned. Thou art therefore free from its bondage. Stand fast in this liberty. Now the condemning power of sin is taken out of thy conscience, make use of the grace provided in Jesus to deliver thine heart from the love of it, and thy conversation from the slavish service of it. And remember this grace is almighty. Trust in it, and thou shalt be saved from the tyranny of every sin. Therefore,

Thirdly, Read the great charter of grace, and mark to what glorious privileges thou art entitled. Being saved from the guilt of all sin, and having a promise of being saved from the dominion of all sin, as the Lord's free-man, thou art by faith to claim thy birth-right and to enjoy it. Since Christ has given thee liberty to whom shouldst thou be a slave? Put off therefore the old man

with his lusts and deeds: serve him no longer: it is a blessed part of redemption to be saved from his service. God be thanked, that he may be put off, as a garment which you have done with, and will put on no more. Away with it, it is filthy and abominable altogether. Yea worse still: the plague is in it. Death and hell are in it: for the old man, sinful nature, thus to be put off, is a body of sin, and selfish tempers are his members, such as anger, wrath, malice, lies, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry. These must be put off, or they will be always plotting and acting against brotherly love. Therefore the new man, renewed in the spirit of his mind, opposes them, and is mighty through God to mortify them. By the same power he puts on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forgiveness of injuries: even as Christ forgave him, so he forgives: and unto all these graces he puts on love, which is the complete binding of them together. What an amiable character is here of the new man! He is created anew in Christ Jesus, that he may exercise every kind and benevolent temper to the brethren. He is renewed in his heart to the unfeigned love of them; and is enabled to manifest it by every work and labour of love. And lest the vile tempers of the old man, still in being, although dethroned, should get dominion again, he is strengthened mightily by the Spirit in the inner man to crucify them day by day. Since this is hard work consisting in continual and severe self-denial, no less than in cutting off right hand, and in plucking out right eye, lusts; for thine encouragement, to persevere, consider,

Fourthly, that thou art *in* Christ—a member in his body—and in him thou hast perfect and eternal redemption from the old man of sin with his affections and lusts. The more this is believed, the more will the fruits of it appear. Faith in the absolute and everlasting victory of thy glorified head will animate thee as one of his members to resist thy vanquished foes, knowing thou

art a partaker of his victory, and in his strength, and to his glory thou art fighting against them. In him thou hast already conquered. In him thou shalt be more than a conqueror. Reckon thyself therefore to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God *in* Jesus Christ thy Lord. And depend on him for the power of his death, that he may put it forth in thee, and mortify sin, and for the power of his resurrection to quicken thee to newness of life. Thy communion with him in his death and resurrection will be in proportion to thy faith. If thou believest stedfastly, that thou art one with him, thou wilt find the effect of it in stedfast communion. Cleave then to him, as a branch to the vine. Planted together in the likeness of his death, thou wilt find virtue coming from him to crucify thy selfish tempers. Planted together in the likeness of his resurrection, thou wilt find virtue coming from him to keep thee alive to God. To this fellowship with Jesus thou art called. Thou hast a right to communicate with him in his life and death. And whilst thou art enjoying it by the faith of the Son of God, sin shall have no more dominion over thee than it has over him. This being thy glorious birth-right, O my soul, put honour upon it. Enjoy it in the peace of thy conscience, and in the love of thy heart. Read thy perfect redemption in Jesus from every thing opposite to brotherly love, and improve this thy experience. As there is sufficient grace promised and provided for thee, see thou make use of it, and manifest it openly in thy tempers and in thy walk! For, consider,

Fifthly, Thy God and Father calls upon thee to give glory to him for his love to thee by exercising love towards the brethren: and thou art bound to this by ten thousand ties. Has he loved thee freely, dost thou know it, and is the grateful sense of it upon thy heart? How then can it be hid? It cannot; it will manifest itself, as light does. The Father has chosen thee in his Son, that he might communicate to thee of his goodness, and he has made thee a child of light, that thou mighest re-

flect the rays of his goodness upon others. Thou art to shew forth the praises of him that hath called thee out of darkness into his marvellous light. He hath called thee out of the deadness and blindness of thy natural state, and hath enlightened thee with the light of life. How marvellous, that it should ever shine upon thee! Marvellous indeed, that thou shouldst shine, as a light in the world! Admire this grace. Let others admire it with thee by seeing the reality, and by feeling the comfort of it. As the sun not only enlightens, but also enlivens with his fruitful rays the face of the earth, and cheers every creature upon it: so let thy light shine before men. Give them clear proof of thy love to God by thy love to them: let them feel the blessed fruits of it, that they may see thy good works, and glorify thy Father who is in heaven. Love in thy heart will shew itself: It will communicate its gracious rays, and the Father of lights will have the praise. This should be thine end, as it is his. He aims at his own glory in all his mercies: this aim should be thine also. Thy Father calls upon thee to do good to others, that he may be glorified thereby. O what an high calling is thine! What an honour does God put upon thee. Thou art to bring him glory from men—from his own children: for their bowels are to be refreshed by thee—and from others, that whereas they would speak against thee as an evil doer, they may, by thy good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Aim at this. Look at no motive to do good to men below the glory of God. And remember, thy doing it may be the means of his visiting them, as he visited thee, with his great salvation. O blessed fruit of brotherly love: may it be the happy effect of thy light shining before men. May God be daily honoured by it, and the comfort, and, if it please him, the salvation, of his people be thereby promoted Yea, Lord, this is my prayer. My heart says, *Amen.*

If thou findest it very difficult to live in the constant practice of brotherly love, meditate, O my soul, upon

the Gospel motives for an increase of faith, and seek for the promised assistance to enable thee to love others as God hath loved thee. Above all expect the effectual teaching of the Holy Ghost. He only can write this delightful law upon the heart—the fair impression of it is kept by his power—and the exercise of it in thy tempers and walk is the work of his grace. O pray then for a constant supply of the Spirit, that in all thy dealings with mankind it may appear thou hast been with Jesus. Set his most amiable life before their eyes. Give them reason to honour his beneficence, from thy copying it legibly after him. Let his love to thee be glorified from thy labour of love to them. Study to shew forth his praises, and go about doing good, as he did. And hereby convince the world, that Jesus Christ was the greatest moralist, and that his disciples come the nearest to the perfect pattern of their master; as a poet of our own observes—

> Talk they of *morals?* O thou bleeding love!
> Thou maker of new morals to mankind!
> The grand morality is love of thee.

The love of Jesus teaches and enforces the love of the brethren. The spirit of Jesus writes it upon the heart, and makes it practical in the life. And thus the two tables are joined together: and love to him that begat, produces love to them that are begotten of him. When the happy believer is walking in this love to his Father and to his family, then he will live in the observance of the duties, which relate to himself: for he was taught them when he returned in his heart to God. And every step he walks with God is in the practice of them.

The first temptation was an offer of independence—"Ye shall be as Gods"—man was drawn away by it, and fell from his high estate. Still this mother sin is fruitful in fallen man. In great mercy there is a pardon provided, and in the way of receiving the pardon, there is a remedy for it. The infinite wisdom of God so contrived the way of our recovery, that without Christ we

can do nothing. His salvation undertaken and finished for us, his salvation applied to us, the blessings of his salvation enjoyed by us in time and in eternity, are the free gifts of his free grace. He is the author. He is the finisher. He carries it on from first to last. All our sufficiency is of him. We cannot without him so much as think a good thought. Therefore his redeemed people are brought off from all trust in any other object, and are taught to place their whole dependence for salvation, and for every thing that accompanies it, upon the Lord Jesus Christ.

To this end the Holy Spirit, the great convincer of sin, had made them acquainted with themselves. He had awakened them to a right knowledge of their state, of which they had not been sensible before; and they found that they were fallen and apostate creatures. He shewed them sin in its exceeding sinfulness, and they tasted some of the bitter fruits of it: they felt in what a dreadful condition their departure from God had left them—so ignorant, that they could not by any human means attain to the least saving knowledge of God—so guilty, that let them do all they could, still the condemning sentence of the law stood out against them—so unholy, that soul and body were sold under sin, and ready to every unholy word and work—so utterly helpless, that it was impossible they should of themselves attain true happiness, or escape deserved misery. The Holy Spirit taught them these lessons practically. His conviction carried demonstration with it. He not only made them feel their guilt and their danger, but he also opened a way for pardon and safety. He led them to Jesus, and in him they found every thing needful for their salvation—treasured up for them by the free covenant love of the Father—secured to them by the fulfilling of all covenant conditions in the life and death of the God-man—and received by the faith of the operation of the Holy Ghost: by whom they were made new creatures in Christ Jesus—members under him their head—united as intimately as the branches are to the vine—and living

by, and in, and on him, every moment, and for every thing. Thus the glorifier of Jesus teaches all his members to depend upon the fulness of their head, and he abides with them in order to keep them in this dependence. He testifies to them of Jesus—"He is your "whole salvation, your all in all; you have not, you "never will have, any thing to glory in, but in the Lord "—whatever good you receive comes from his grace— "whatever evil you escape, is from his blessing—and if "ever you have eternal life, it will be the free gift of "God in Christ Jesus. Your bodies also are dependent "on him, as well as your souls: personal, family, na- "tional mercies are his royal favours, and bestowed out "of his sovereign bounty." Thus he teaches believers. He humbles them, that they may exalt the Saviour. He makes them poor in spirit that they may live upon his riches. He keeps them sensible of their own emptiness, that they may be making constant use of the Saviour's fulness, and living in an absolute dependence upon him for every thing. While they live thus by the faith of the Son of God, every high thought is brought into subjection to him. Pride is daily mortified. Self-complacency is abhorred. Self-admiration is abominable. Humility is become their clothing, and they cannot put it off: because every moment they are making use of it. Sins, wants, miseries, temptations, &c. are continually reminding them of their vileness, and of God's goodness. And this truth enforced by the Holy Spirit, makes them willing to learn of Jesus to be meek and lowly. They become teachable scholars, and sit very low at his feet, where they attain to true humility of heart. And this influences their whole behaviour. In a deep and abiding sense of their entire sinfulness and helplessness they loath themselves before God, and walk humbly before men. They feel they are of themselves nothing but sin, and, if left to themselves, can be nothing but misery; therefore they put their whole trust and confidence in a covenant God, and his free grace has from them all its glory.

What is thy knowledge, O my soul, and what is thine experience of this christian poverty of spirit? Art thou acquainted with it in the ground of thine heart, and is it in thy daily practice? Examine thyself, and with diligence: for it is a most blessed grace, advanced to high honour in the court of Jesus. To it he has made many exceeding great and precious promises. O pray to him for this royal gift. Wait on thy divine prophet, and hear his lessons. He teaches as man cannot. He recommends; he gives, the grace of humility. He makes his scholars truly humble in heart. Observe his abasing doctrine; and may all within thee bow to the power of it.

Observe, how he humbles the sinner. He convinces him of his sinful state, of the corruption of his whole nature, and of the depravity of every faculty of soul and body. The sinner is made to feel it and to live under the sense of it. And, in order to fasten the conviction, clearer discoveries are daily made of this corruption; for it is a mystery of iniquity. There is no tracing to the bottom its deep laid devices, and never ceasing workings. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked: who can know it? There is not a man upon earth, who knows all that may be known of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and of his own sinfulness. When the Lord who searcheth the heart, has laid open some of its infinite evil, he continues to discover more. Every day brings to light strange workings of corruption. The convinced sinner has deeper views of his helplessness, and of his unworthiness. And after many vain legal trials he at last finds it impossible for him to do any thing, for which God should pardon him and save him. Thus he is laid low with his mouth in the dust—Behold, I am vile, filthy and abominable altogether, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

These are the humbling lessons, which the holy Spirit teaches. He convinces the sinner, that there is neither help nor hope in himself, and so leaves him

nothing to trust in, but the salvation provided in Jesus by covenant love, and given freely by grace. And the manner of receiving this salvation is such as cuts off all occasion of boasting: For faith is the only means appointed of God,—and faith is his gift—not bestowed upon the worthy but upon the ungodly—not for any merit in them, or for any terms or conditions, which they have performed or ever will perform, but by an act of absolute sovereignty to the praise of the glory of his own grace. He will have mercy, because he will have mercy. O humbling consideration! How low does it bring the sinner? How must his proud heart be abased, while he feels himself a debtor for every thing good to the mere will and pleasure of God. And so long as he enjoys those good things, he is kept poor in spirit: Because he has none of them in himself. They are laid up in the fulness of Jesus, are to be had from thence only by faith, and are received as the sense of his wants leads the believer to make use of them. Living by faith is the death of self-importance. Then the loftiness of man is bowed down, the haughtiness of man is made low, and the Lord alone is exalted.

Observe, O my soul, what an honour God has put upon this grace, "Before honour is humility." Whom God honours he humbles first. He giveth grace to the humble: Because the humble give him all his glory. The highest throne which he has upon earth is in the humblest heart. To it he vouchsafes his constant presence, and makes the greatest communications of his love: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that in-"habiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the "high and holy place, with him also that is of a con-"trite and humble spirit to revive the spirit of the hum-"ble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." O what an honour is here promised to the humble! The greatest they can have on this side of heaven. God will dwell with them; and what a blessing! and his temple shall be in the humble heart. The high and holy One passes by what is in highest esteem among men. He

stains the pride of human greatness and goodness. He does not vouchsafe to set up his throne with the princes, nor to give his honour to the learned, of the world. But he puts honour upon the contrite and humble. He condescends to visit them, yea he delights to dwell with them, and in them—the highest above all heavens in the lowest hearts. There he communicates his choicest love and richest favours. O my God, bestow upon me this grace, which in thy sight is so precious. Humble me that I may be revived with thy presence, and refreshed daily with thy love. Give me more humility, and fit me for nearer fellowship with thee. Bring down every high thought, and let me find it true, that God resisteth the proud, but giveth more grace unto the humble.

Thus the true poverty of spirit is needful, not only to bring the sinner to Christ, but also to preserve the believer in communion with him: For so long as he walks by faith, every thing will tend to promote this communion. In the daily sense of his wants, he will go to his bountiful Saviour for a supply. In the feeling of his misery, he will depend on his loving Saviour for relief; whereby he will be led to more intercourse with him. What he finds wrong in himself will bring him to live more by faith, and as faith increases, so will his delight in God. He will grow more sensible of his weakness, and that will make him stronger in the Lord. He will know more of his own heart which will humble him and keep him dependent on the grace of Jesus. He will see reason not to lean to his own understanding, but ever to pray, Lord, guide me by thy good Spirit. Viewing spots and blemishes in his best doings, his triumph will be, "I will make mention of thy righ-"teousness, Lord Jesus, even of thine ONLY." Thus every thing will humble him, and lead him to live more by faith; by which means he will get faster hold of Jesus, live in nearer fellowship, and be receiving out of his fulness grace for grace—two graces at once—the blessing needed—and thankfulness for it. Hereby a sweet inter-

course will be kept open. To the humble God delights to give grace, and they delight to return him his glory. The more he gives, the more glory would they gladly return. And he does give more, and he receives it back again in thanks and praise. Blessed grace! by which this holy fellowship is maintained. Happy humility! by which the heart being emptied of self is made capable of receiving the fulness which is of God. Then is the promise fulfilled—"Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs "is the kingdom of heaven"—it is theirs now—not only in title, but also in possession: for the kingdom of God is within them. And they are partakers at present of its blessings and glories, as truly, though not so perfectly, as they will be in heaven. Meditate, O my soul, upon this divine grace. Thou seest the necessity of it, O pray earnestly for it, and for more of it. The great idol SELF must be dethroned, where God reigns. Thou canst not walk with him, unless thou art humble in heart. And if thou hast been walking with him, thou wilt be taught to stop, whenever thou beginnest to look at thyself with admiration. O beg of the Lord then to give thee the true gospel poverty of spirit. It is to be in constant practice and used for every thing: for thou seest how it keeps up fellowship with God, who makes the greatest communications of himself to the humblest. And the reason is plain: because they return him all his glory. If therefore thou wouldst have much grace in exercise, pray for much humility. O my God, whatever thou givest, give humility with it, that I may not seek self in it, but thine honour, nor lay it out upon myself, but to thy glory. Meek and lowly Jesus, make me like thyself: keep me learning of thee, till I am perfectly like thee. I would come always poor to thee to receive of thy riches, and to receive with them an humble heart to praise thee for them. O let thy glory be mine end and aim. Let me and mine be thine—I humbled—thou exalted. Let thy graces and gifts bring thee in a constant revenue of praise. And may thine increasing goodness be joined with a constant in-

crease of humility, that my heart and all within me may bless and praise thy holy name to-day, and for ever. *Amen.* And,

Let this appear in my whole behaviour to others. This is another blessed fruit of humility. It has an influence over the believer's intercourse with mankind, and renders his tempers and manners loving and amiable. Pride was not made for man, and yet it is in all men, and is the chief parent of human woe. It sets people above their place, and makes them think, that they could support the greatest fortunes, and are able to manage the most difficult affairs. Others, as proud as they, deny them their fancied superiority. Hence come wars and fightings, public and private. The sweet grace of humility sent from heaven to relieve those distresses: for into whatever bosom it enters, it renders men kind to one another, tender hearted, ready to every good word and work. Thus runs the divine exhortation: "Be ye "kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, "in honour preferring one another." This is heart-humility, which the holy Spirit requires, and which he bestows. He brings his disciples into humble subjection to God, and then to one another: which has the most happy effects upon public, social, and private happiness. How would these flourish, if all men were of a meek and quiet spirit? But there is none of this among the unconverted, and alas? how little is there among believers? How often are they found in the proud spirit of the world? acting contrary to the lowly spirit of Jesus. And yet it is not for want of precept, nor for want of promished help: but it is because they are not walking by faith, as becometh the gospel, nor out of love to God's glory studying to recommend humility by their practice. Observe, O my soul, the remedy provided of God for the subduing of all selfish tempers, and pray that it may be effectual in thy life and conversation. "Do ye "think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that "dwelleth in us lusteth to envy: But God giveth more "grace, wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but

"giveth grace unto the humble." This scripture cannot speak in vain; for fallen man is certainly such as he is here described. The spirit that dwelleth in him, in his own nature, lusted to envy—a passion made up of pride and discontent—offended with God—and displeased with the blessings, which he bestows upon men. It is an enemy to the love both of God and man, and transgresses the law of both tables. Pride brought it into heaven, and the fallen angels brought it into this world. Ever since it entered by sin, natural corruption breaks out very much in envy. But God giveth more grace, to conquer this passion, than sinful nature has to put it forth. He not only gives grace to pardon it, but also more grace to subdue it; so that envy loses its dominion in the reign of grace. We cannot subdue, any more than we can pardon, envy, pride, and such passions, but grace is almighty. Want ever so much, use ever so much, God has still more for you. And he gives more, when the creature is humbled enough to take it out of the hands of his mercy. Thus he overcomes envy: "For he resisteth the proud," he is at open war with them, and they with him. Pride lifts up the creature against the Creator; and puts it upon seeking happiness out of God: this is resisting his sovereignty, attacking his providence, and opposing his law. He is concerned to pull such rebels down, and he says their pride goeth before destruction: "But he giveth grace "unto the humble"—he gives them grace to humble them, and being emptied, he delights to fill them: for then they are disposed to receive his grace, and to value it. Whatever God gives, the humble give it back again to him. They have the blessing, he has the praise: which is the just tribute due to him for his gifts. And he gives more grace, where he can get more glory. Thus he subdues self conceit with its various proud workings. And as grace reigns over them, humility prevails; which has a friendly aspect towards mankind. It keeps brotherly love in the heart, and tends mightily to the practice of every social virtue. Humility suffer-

eth long and is kind, humility envieth not; humility vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil.

Consider, O my soul, those motives to an holy walk. Put them altogether. Weigh them carefully, again and again. Do it faithfully as in the presence of God. And then try, whether thou art walking in the way of duty with a free spirit. Dost thou proceed upon evangelical or upon legal principles? Dost thou serve God for wages, or for love? Examine thy heart. God looks chiefly at it. How is it in duty? Is thine obedience to justify thee in the least, or does it spring from a sense of thy being justified freely and fully? Art thou going about to establish thine own righteousness, or dost thou submit to the righteousness of God? Art thou working from life, or for life? I require thee to examine diligently by the light of the word, and by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, what thy motives are: For there is no acceptable obedience, but what is done in faith: Whatsoever is not of faith, is sin. If thou art acting aright the love of Christ is constraining thee to obedience. Thou art living under the influence of free-grace. Thy conscience is at peace with God. Thou hast sweet liberty to serve him without fear. Thy heart delights in his service, and love makes his ways the joy of thy soul. Thou knowest what Jacob felt, when he served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed unto him but a few days for the love he had to her. A Gospel-spirit does the same to God—love makes long service short —and hard service easy. Nothing is pain, which love does. And this is gospel obedience. It is faith working by love, which refines duty into a grace; the commandments are exalted into privileges; the ordinances become happy means of fellowship with God. The believer meets God in them, and by free converse he exercises and improves his love. He draws near to God, and God draws near to him in prayer, in praise, in hearing the word, at the Lord's supper, and in all

sabbath duties. In these ways God manifests his gracious presence, and the believer rejoices in it. God communicates his grace, and the believer receives them with thankfulness. O my soul, pray before duty for much of this communion with God in it. Seek it as the one great end of all duty. And if thou findest it, bless and praise the goodness of thy God. But still seek to be more spiritual and evangelical, that the fruits of thy fellowship with God may appear in thy practice of the duties of the second table. Love to God will manifest itself by love to men: For the Holy Spirit teaches all his disciples to love one another, and he teaches effectually. He not only makes them understand what brotherly love is, but he also gives it. They become partakers of the grace, and are enabled to practise it. Thus he recommends and enforces his lessons. He renders his scholars kind to one another, and tender-hearted. He puts forth his mighty power, and subdues the vile selfish tempers of the old man, and brings into use the benevolent tempers of the new man. While he carries on the gracious work his disciples grow more acquainted with themselves, and learn heart humility. He makes them feel their fallen state, their sinfulness and their danger; in the sense of their guilt and of their distance from God they are willing to receive Christ for their whole salvation, and then to enjoy in him, all the blessings of the Father's love in earth and heaven.

If thou findest it difficult, O my soul, to walk according to this rule: If to obey from love to God—to love men for God's sake—and in the sense of thine own vileness to be humbled to the dust—If these be hard lessons; consider what makes them so. Where is the difficulty? Is it not in thyself? And is it not chiefly in thy not using and not bringing into practice the principles advanced in the former chapters. Duty must be hard, if the spring of obedience be not in motion; but if this act freely, then all will go on well.

Thy whole conduct through life depends upon the

nature of the salvation, of which thou art a partaker by grace. Consider it attentively. The growing knowledge of it will engage thine affections to a willing obedience. Is it not a complete salvation—an absolutely perfect work—yea the greatest work of God? Because all the rest come from it, and lead to it. Is it not the infinitely wise contrivance of the eternal Three, for which everlasting glory is to be given to every divine attribute? When every other work of God shall cease, for this all heaven will to eternity be ascribing honour and blessing and praise to Father, Son, and Spirit. Attend, O my soul, to the scripture account of this salvation. Review the glory of it. Read again and again the revealed descriptions of it, till thy heart be satisfied, that this salvation is as perfect and complete, as the Lord God Almighty could make it. This is its character. Hast thou studied it well, and art thou well grounded and established in the belief of it? Mind: this is the foundation. If this totter, so will all the super-structure. O pray then, and be earnest in prayer that God would enlarge thy views of the infinitely glorious and everlastingly perfect salvation, which is in Christ Jesus.

As thou growest more acquainted with it, thou wilt see less reason to be discouraged at the experience of what thou art in thyself. It is a salvation for sinners—such as thou art—and no way differing from thee. Only when they are called to the knowledge of the truth, they are acquainted with their fallen state, are made sensible of their helplessness and of their misery, but are made willing to cast their souls at God's command upon the Lord Jesus, trusting to the peace which he made by the blood of the cross. And art not thou in the happy number of these redeemed sinners? Dost not thou believe the record, which God hath given of his Son, and look upon it as thy lawful warrant—to make use of what is laid up in the fulness of Jesus—thine to take freely—thine to use fully—the more the better—thine for receiving, without any condition or

any qualification? He loves to give, and without money or money's worth. He thinks himself honoured by the pensioners of his grace, who bring nothing to recommend themselves, but their sins and miseries, and yet trust in his promised relief. Herein he glories. When they come to him believing, he bestows his royal gifts upon every one of them: and so far as they believe, he withholds nothing that is needful for their holy walk in the way of duty.

These are the principles, which thou art to bring into practice. Carry them, O my soul, into every act of obedience. Go to prayer and every duty with this faith, that thou art in Christ, and in him a partaker of his finished salvation. Then the Father's love to thee will be manifest, and thou wilt have sweet fellowship with him in all thine approaches to the throne—Whatever thou undertakest, forget not this leading truth. If thou lose sight of it, thou wilt get into darkness: If thou art not influenced by it, thou wilt be brought into bondage. Upon this absolutely perfect salvation thou art to live by faith upon earth, and thou wilt have nothing else to live upon by sense in heaven. Trusting to the complete work of Jesus thou art to walk with thy God in time, as thou wilt follow the Lamb in eternity, receiving all out of his fulness. O view him in this light, and it will have the happiest effects upon thy daily walk. While thou art receiving from him grace for grace, thou wilt live with him in sweet friendship, duty will be the way and means of enjoying the love of thy divine friend, and the more thou art in his company the more delightful will be the way of his commandments. These are the privileges. Read the promises concerning them. Call to mind what thy Father in Jesus has engaged to give his children. Has he not provided grace sufficient for them? And is it not for his honour, as well as thy profit, that he should give both the will and the power to walk humbly with him? O plead his promises. Bind him with his faithfulness.

Be importunate with him, and pray without ceasing. Let this be thy daily plea.

O my God, order my walk according to thy holy word. It is thy mind and will, that I should love thee with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and my neighbour as myself: but I am not sufficient for these things. There is no pure love in my soul by nature. Every affection in me is turned from the Creator to the creature. I am in bondage, a slave to lust, sold under sin. I cannot love thee, infinitely lovely as thou art, until thou break my bonds asunder, and set my soul at liberty. But being now redeemed from guilt and fear, I am become thy freeman; and for the unspeakable redemption that is in Jesus, thou wouldst have me to serve thee. Blessed be thy holy name for requiring mine obedience upon this sweet motive,—"I "am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the "land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage." On this account obey me: because I am the Lord your God, and I stand related to you, as your Redeemer from slavery. O my gracious God and Father, I desire upon this motive to keep thy commandments. I believe thou art my God in Jesus, and through him I have redemption from bondage to my sins and enemies. With this free spirit would I always go to duty: but I cannot walk in this liberty, any more than I could at first attain it, without thy grace. O my God, let the spirit of adoption abide with me, that he may draw me nearer to thee in thy ways and ordinances, and I may in them enjoy more of thy presence, and of the light of thy countenance. Thee I seek in them. Thou art the end of all ways and means: and if they lead me not to thee, I go empty away. Gracious God, make thy commandments the joy of my heart, and let them be the means of keeping up holy intercourse and happy fellowship with thee. This my heart pants after. Duty without this is nothing worth. I wait in thine appointed ways for the visits of thy grace, hoping to grow in knowledge and faith, in hope and love. The commu-

nion, which I have enjoyed, has increased my longing. My soul is athirst for God, praying to be more with thee, and more like thee. And is not this what thou requirest, and what thou hast promised to do for me? Grant me then, my gracious God, the prayer of my heart. In all my duties let me enjoy thy presence, and communications of thy love. Let me do them in faith, and with a single eye to thy glory. Let me be thus spiritual and heavenly minded in them, that I may grow up into Christ Jesus in all things.

And I desire, Holy Father, to grow in love to thee, that I may manifest the fruits of it by my love to mankind. Pardon every selfish temper, which is opposite to the love of the brethren: and teach me to love them, as thou hast loved me. Whatever thou hast promised, fulfil in me. Make me, O thou spirit of love, like the loving Jesus. Give me his benevolent tempers, and help me to imitate his beneficent actions. Let his love to me be the pattern of my love to them. Since thou hast in much mercy made me a child of light, O let me shine before men, that they may see and feel my good works, and may glorify thee for them. And the more thou doest in me, and by me, humble me still more, O my God. Keep me meek and lowly, always ready to give the glory of all my mercies to the Three in Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, to whom be equal honour and praise for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. VII.

The believer goes on his way rejoicing to God.

HAPPY is the man, to whom it is given on the behalf of Christ to believe. He has the blessing of peace. He is reconciled to God through faith in the blood of Jesus: And he is freely justified through faith in the righte-

ousness of Jesus. The Father has accepted him in his beloved Son, and it is the joy of his soul to know it; therefore he loves God, because God first loved him. In the enjoyment of this love he finds his heaven begun. By the same Spirit, who manifested it and shed it abroad in his heart, he is kept seeking for more discoveries of it. In every appointed means he waits. As the hart panted after the water-brooks, so panteth his soul after more of the presence of God, and of the light of his loving countenance. Having a command——Seek ye my face——he obeys it from his heart: but his chief view in obedience is to behold the face of the Lord turned to him in love. He wants fellowship with God in duty, which highly ennobles and also endears it to him. He performs it in faith, and in a free spirit. He goes to it, as a beloved child to a most loving parent: and his heavenly Father meets him in it, receives him graciously, speaks to his heart, and makes him sensible that he can deny him no manner of thing, which is good. Hence the ways of duty become ways of pleasantness. The farther he advances in them, and the more spiritual he grows in the performance of them, he finds clear communications of his Father's grace and love, which still increase his joy, and afford him surer earnests, and happier foretastes of joy unspeakable and full of glory.

As for the ungodly it is not so with them. They are always seeking after joy. They are busy, and weary themselves in the pursuit of it, but they cannot find it. While they are turned in heart from the Lord, they look downwards for it; where it is not. They expect it will spring out of the ground: and if they cannot discover it upon the surface, they will dig into the bowels of the earth for treasures of hidden joy. But they disquiet themselves in vain. It is the sovereign decree of the almighty, that nothing can make a sinner truly happy but God in Christ: this they will not believe; and therefore they go from creature to creature, from object to object, enquiring, Where is the best joy to be found? Each promises them—it is in me. But each disappoints

them. And yet they go on, seeking it to-day in that very thing which deluded them yesterday. Yea, their foolish hearts are willingly deluded. They love to be pursuing what it is impossible they should attain. If after many trials they find the emptiness of one creature comfort, then they turn to another. And they will try the whole compass of beings and things, and will at last die in the trial, rather than seek for joy, where it is holy, perfect, and everlasting.

The believer is saved from this vain pursuit. He has been convinced of the insufficiency of the creature to make him happy. He has seen an end of all perfection in it. He can say with the royal preacher, "Vanity "of vanities, all is vanity"—all is changeable and imperfect under the sun; for the whole world lieth in wickedness and under the curse. Deeply sensible of his error in having sought for joy in the way of destruction, he now seeks it in the living God. Here he comes to the supreme good, the spring head of true joy: and the streams which he receives from thence are always in proportion to his faith. If this be strong, there is great joy in the soul. If this be weak, joy is at a low ebb. The effect is according to the cause which produces it. Joy in God is the effect of faith: according to the apostle's prayer, "Now the God of hope fill "you with all joy in believing." There is a present fulness of joy which we have by believing, as there is a future fulness of joy, which we shall have by sense. So that joy rises as believing does—fulness of believing brings in ALL joy—present enjoyment increasing as the title to future is clear. The present is the divine pledge of the future, and is therefore given us, that by believing we may now rejoice in the Lord, and be glad in the God of our salvation.

From hence it appears, how necessary it is to the believer's walking in joy, that his understanding should be clearly enlightened with the knowledge of the doctrines of grace, and that his heart should be established in the belief of them. Thou canst not, O my soul, re-

view them too much, nor meditate upon them too long; for they enter into the very essence of all true joy. Study the Gospel method of making reconciliation for iniquity, which was the work of Immanuel, and of reconciling man to God, which is the work of the Holy Spirit. Has he done this in thee, and art thou reconciled to God? Is thy conscience at peace, is thine heart happy through faith in the atonement and righteousness of thy Saviour? Art thou satisfied of thy perfect acceptance in the beloved? Dost thou therefore obey thy Father out of gratitude, and go to duty to meet him, and to have fellowship with him in his love, and to glorify him for it. Dost thou find his presence? Is he with thee in all means, and art thou seeking in them for nearer and more intimate communion with him? Since this is thy case, what return wilt thou make for such inestimable favours? Surely thou wilt be glad in the Lord, and wilt rejoice in the God of thy salvation. Being at peace with him, and a partaker of his love—waiting for the establishing of this peace and love in the way of obedience, and expecting more communion with thy God in the way of duty, who can have greater reason to rejoice? A saved sinner, delivered by mere grace from wrath and hell, entitled to all spiritual blessings from Christ Jesus, and already admitted to partake of them, may sing and make melody in his heart all the way to heaven. And yet alas! how often art thou, O my soul, in heaviness, walking in distress and cast down, as if thy hope of rejoicing was in vain. And this is not thy case alone. It is too common. How many of God's children spend their days in a mournful frame, and seem to forget their high calling and undoubted title to the fulness of joy. Meditate a little upon the ingratitude of this behaviour, and may the Gospel motives to rejoice in the Lord always be the means of saving thee from an unthankful and mournful temper.

First observe, he requires it of thee. The Scripture speaks much of the holy joy of believers, and calls for

it. They are in duty bound to be glad in their God, as much as to pray to him: For he is always bestowing mercies upon them, which demand their everlasting tribute of thanks: and they cannot be thankful without being joyful. How closely were these two united in the holy Psalmist? None ever more famous for praising God, or for rejoicing in God. What he felt himself he often exhorts the redeemed to experience: "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous: for praise is "comely for the upright: Light is sown for the righ- "teous, and gladness for the upright in heart: Rejoice "in the Lord ye righteous, and give thanks at the re- "membrance of his holiness:" Remember his righteousness and holiness, how great they are, and how great the grace is, which has found out a way to make you righteous and holy: Remember those blessings with faith, and your hearts will be glad, and your mouth will praise God with joyful lips. What a sense had the prophet of those blessings, when he broke forth into this acknowledgment? "I will greatly rejoice in the "Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he "hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he "hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a "bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as "a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." These are the wedding garments, with which the heavenly bridegroom adorns his church, and in which he introduces her to the eternal banquet of love. Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Blessed are they indeed: for they are arrayed in royal robes; their souls are all glorious with the beauties of Immanuel, with his divine righteousness and matchless graces. They have reason now to rejoice greatly: For they shall soon come to Sion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever. These Scriptures prove evidently, that believers are called upon to rejoice; It is their bounden duty to be glad in their God, for they are not living like his

children, and making up their happiness in their Father's love, unless they are rejoicing in his rich and everlasting blessings: For

Secondly, Joy arises from the sense of some good. Joy in God arises from the sense of his being our chief good, and of our interest in him. And this is the joy of faith: Which is not in the least like the light frothy joy of the sensualist, nor the wanton mirth of the unthinking multitude. It is not drawn, as worldly joy is, from vain perishing things, but from the word of God, which standeth fast for ever. It springs from the revelation of grace and mercy in Jesus; and from giving credit to it. Whoever honours its testimony, as the truth of God, will be convinced, that he trusting to the atonement of Jesus shall never perish, and trusting to the righteousness of Jesus shall have everlasting life. Hence come joy and peace in believing. The conscience is reconciled to God, and is at peace. The heart is made sensible of the love of God, and rejoices in him. This was the experience of the sweet singer of Israel in the 33d Psalm: "Our heart shall rejoice in the Lord, "BECAUSE we have trusted in his holy name." This is a good reason. Whoever trusts in God will certainly rejoice in God: for by trusting in his word, and by depending upon his faithfulness, he cannot be disappointed of the good things, which God has promised. We have an instance of this in a trembling despairing sinner, who had drawn his dagger, and was plunging it into his heart. In that moment he heard of Jesus. It was given him to feel his want of a Saviour—Sirs, says he to Paul and Silas, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe *in the name of* the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house. And they preached unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and REJOICED BELIEVING. O what a happy

change was here, and made by believing? The self-murderer forgets his bloody design, and drops his dagger. Hears of a pardon and believes. His black despair gives way to sweet peace in God. His misery ends in the knowledge of a joyful salvation. How blessed are they that believe! God has pronounced them, and God will make them blessed. There is no misery deserved, but by faith they are saved from it; and no good promised, but by faith they may now enjoy it: They have therefore all the reason to rejoice, that any person can have on this side of heaven. For,

Thirdly, This joy is distinguished from the vain joy of the world, by its author. It is the gift of God. It is one of the graces of the Spirit of God. St. Paul says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy," &c.—love to God, and then rejoicing in God. When the Spirit of adoption enters into any heart, he manifests by believing the love of the Father, and thereby excites it into holy joy. He comes to make the soul happy in its return to God. It is the very end for which he is sent from the Father and the Son, and therefore it is called the joy of the Holy Ghost. It is his fruit, produced by his influence, and kept by his power. It is like himself, of a spiritual and heavenly nature—a pure affection—in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. He refines it from creature-delight, and exalts it above sensual pleasure; For it is the result of nearness to God, and the effect of fellowship with him: Which is:

Fourthly, another blessed ingredient in the joy of believers. It has God for its object. It is joy in God as their God, their supreme good, known, believed in, and enjoyed. The Holy Spirit has consecrated their hearts for fellowship with him. He has brought a free pardon for past apostasy, and full power to dethrone creature-love. And he abides in their hearts to subdue it. He enlightens their understandings to see the vanity of the creature, and the fulness of God, and he enables them to reject every thing, that promises them happiness if they cannot enjoy God in it. Thus he keeps

their hearts chaste and fixed upon God. Their joy becomes simple, as their faith is: For this looks at the finished salvation, and resting entirely upon it, sees God perfectly reconciled; thereby it lays a sure foundation for their joy in God; because they now know him by faith to be their God, and can see their interest in all the blessings of his love in Jesus. This is the fountain head of joy, from whence flow rivers of pleasure for evermore. The nearer they live to the fountain head, the more communion they have with God: Their hearts become purer and holier, and their joys are more spiritual and heavenly.

This is the only remedy for the miseries, with which the world abounds. Men are uneasy, seek for joy, and cannot find it; because they seek where it is not. They go to broken cisterns which cannot hold it. They are disappointed, and wonder. But still go on, spending their days in this vain pursuit. They do not attain any true joy. It flies from them, and at last they lie down in sorrow. What thanks then art thou bound, O my soul, to return unto thy God who has saved thee from this delusion! What a mercy it is, that thou hast been led to the fountain of joy! O live near it, and from it derive all thy streams. Seek them all in God, and seek them in faith upon the warrant of the divine promise. He has said, "The meek shall increase their joy in the "Lord, they shall have it and increase it." The more meek and lowly thou art, the more wilt thou be joyful in God. Pray then for growing humility, that thou mayest experience the sweetness of this Scripture—"Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice"—there is always a matter of joy in the Lord. What a fulness did he find, who testifies of it thus—"My joy "shall be in the Lord—God is the gladness of my joy "—all my springs are in thee—for thou art my exceed-"ing joy." Happy prince! All his springs came from God and led him to God. He did not draw his happiness from the brooks, but from the fountain. The brooks dry up, but the fountain cannot. He did not

rejoice in his crown and dignity, in his victories and treasures, or in any worldly good. He enjoyed God in them, who was the joy of his heart. He only valued the gifts, for the sake of the giver: for he made use of them by faith; and then they were the means of bringing him near to God, and of keeping up communion with God. Whatever does this is a great blessing: And every thing should do this to a believer. While he lives, like a child of God, he exercises his faith for spirituals and temporals; and his heavenly Father blesses him according to his word, wherein he hath caused him to put his trust, and gives him continual matter for joy and thankfulness.

This is the portion of the Lord's people. He has entailed it on them. It comes to them by inheritance. And thou art bound, O my soul, to make use of it. Thy duty and interest call upon thee to enjoy much of it. Thy gratitude for the exceeding great mercies of the Father's love cannot be so properly shewn, as by rejoicing in him; for the thankful heart cannot but be joyful. It feels happy in God. My meditation of him, says a grateful soul, shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord. This is a just tribute, which the Father expects, and which the holy Spirit enables his children to return him. "Blessed is people that know the joyful sound, "they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy counte-"nance: IN THY NAME shall they rejoice all the day; "and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted." These are great privileges, which God has promised and does bestow upon his people. It is true they do not all alike rejoice with great joy; but they all ought. When their faith is weak, their joy is little. But they have the same right to believe, and to rejoice in believing. There is the same provision made for the whole family and household of faith. They are interested in the same covenant, have the same promises, and the same faithfulness to make them good. They have perfect security given them, that they may trust and not be afraid. The people who know the joyful sound of a free grace

salvation, have good reason to believe without doubt or wavering. By such a faith they will see God perfectly reconciled to them, and will behold the light of his countenance shining on them in love. A blessed sight! To see it clearly is glory begun, to walk in it is glory increasing. What is it but heaven, to rejoice all the day long! But then it must be IN THY NAME, in the incarnate word, in Jehovah Jesus; by faith in whose righteousness they shall be exalted, as high as a creature can be—being justified freely and fully they have access into this perfect grace wherein they stand, and they rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and not only so, but they rejoice in the way to glory, in tribulations also, knowing that all things are working together for their present, and for their eternal enjoyment of God.

For their encouragement thus to rejoice in the Lord he has promised them, that the joy which he gives shall not be taken away, which is

Fifthly, Another great privilege. True joy is the gift of God. Is a grace of the Spirit of God. It has God for its author, and God for its object: and it has this prerogative annexed to it, that no one can destroy this gift of grace. The Lord Christ declares, that he will not suffer any creature to take away what he bestows. What a rich cordial was this to his dejected apostles? They were mourning upon account of his leaving them and were sadly cast down, as men without hope. But he revives their drooping hearts with a promise—"I "will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and "your joy no one taketh from you." This is indeed strong consolation: for it is one of the streams, which maketh glad the city of God—a stream that never fails—it runs out of the ocean of free grace, and none can stop its running back into it. Not as the world giveth. give I unto you, says Jesus. The world giveth, empty joys, continueth them by an uncertain tenure, at last takes away all its gifts, and leaves its deluded votary to suffer the vengence of eternal fire. Whereas Christ gives what is truly good, solid and lasting. His

gifts are without repentance. He is of one mind in continuing, as well as in giving; for his motives are in and of himself, and always the same. His own mere love, his free grace, and the good pleasure of his own will dispose him to give and to continue his favours; and his one end is his own glory. Therefore he will not take away the joy, which he has given, and he will suffer no one to take it away. He secures by his power what he gives by his love. Such is the believer's right to rejoice in the Lord always. His title is indefeasible. God has freely given him in Christ all the good that can make him happy: and he enjoys it, and is happy so far as he lives by faith. While he goes on from faith to faith his joys increase. Growing faith brings him in a richer harvest of joy. And he is commanded still to proceed, until his joy be full, which is a

Sixth privilege, peculiar to joy in God. Other springs fail. They are often dry. And when they run the fullest he that drinks of their water thirsts the more. But joy in God has a satisfying fulness. The fountain is always full, yea is always running over; and all the streams bring happy peace, and holy joy. The more a man drinks thereof the more sober and spiritual he becomes; for whatever flows out of this fountain is grace, sanctifying grace; the more we partake of it we grow more like it. There is in it the divine property of conforming and assimilating us to itself: for it weakens the corruption of nature, and strengthens the faculties of the new-man; and as these grow stronger, they cleave closer to God, and have more fellowship with him. By which means they partake more of his joy. A happy partaker of it declares—"In thy presence is the fulness of joy." And therefore he prays—"Make me full of "joy with thy countenance"—the presence of God with me, and his loving countenance shining upon me is the fullest joy upon earth. And this comes from the grace of the Holy Spirit, and is received by faith. Our Lord says to his disciples—"These things have I spoken "unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that

"your joy might be full." His end in speaking was to give them good reason to rejoice, and to continue rejoicing, and if they received what he spake with full assurance, as they ought to do, it would produce in them a fulness of joy. And this would be so much to his honour and to their profit, that he commands them to ask it of the Father in his name—"Ask, and ye "shall receive, that your joy may be full." To the same purpose the apostle John, treating of the person of God incarnate, through whom we have fellowship with the Father in all the blessings of his love, says, "These "things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." His design in writing was to lead them to nearer fellowship with the blessed Trinity, and to stir them up to seek in it their fulness of joy: and they have it full, who, satisfied of their title to the Father's blessings, are receiving them freely out of the Son's fulness by the grace of the Spirit. It becometh them well to rejoice: for in the same blessings, there is fulness of joy for evermore, joy unspeakable, and full of glory.

Put all these considerations together, and then see, O my soul, what a rich provision thy God has made for the joy of thy heart. Admire and adore him for his great salvation, for delivering thee from sin and sorrow, and for the free gift of righteousness and life eternal. To pardon, to justify, to glorify such an one, as thou art, O what divine and infinite grace! What wilt thou return him for manifesting his love to thee, and for engaging thy love to him? How great is thy debt for admitting thee to fellowship with him, as thy God and Father, and for the gracious communications of his love to thee in Jesus! What a subject is here before thee for delightful praise! Look at it in any true light, thou hast reason to be glad with exceeding great joy. God the infinite fountain of good, is thy God. He rejoices in thee, therefore thou shouldest rejoice in him. He has loved thee freely: how canst thou be sensible of this without loving him? His love has blessed thee with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus: whilst thou art

receiving them out of his fulness, how canst thou refuse to thank him with joyful lips? he says, that he rejoices over thee to do thee good; the belief of this should fill thy heart with joy and gladness. Indeed there is nothing in God, but what should be to thee matter of rejoicing. His faithfulness and justice are on thy side, as well as his never failing compassions: for he is thy God, thy covenant God, he has given his Son for thee and his Spirit to thee: by his grace thou hast been called to enjoy fellowship with the Father and the Son, and to partake of their covenant blessings. It is thy privilege to be improving this fellowship, and even upon earth to be tasting of the joys of heaven. May thy faith bring thee in a rich feast, yea a fulness of joy till thy cup run over with the rivers of pleasure, which are at God's right hand for evermore.

Remember, O my soul, it is thy duty and thy privilege thus to rejoice in God. It is thine interest, and thy happiness. Thy God requires it of thee as the grateful acknowledgment of his favours: They are all of grace, inestimably rich and everlasting. He would have thee to honour him for the gifts by rejoicing in the giver. Joy is the sense of his goodness to thee: and canst thou receive the present, and live in hopes of the eternal blessings of his goodness, and yet be without a joyful sense of them? Examine well, and try thyself. How is thy heart? Is it happy in God? Is it happy in nothing but God? Whatever a man puts his trust in, from that he expects his happiness. In what then dost thou trust? Certainly thou wilt say, my trust is in the mercy of God for ever and ever. And should not he be the only matter of thy joy, who is the only ground of thy faith? If he be, then why art thou so often cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me? How many dejections, what great sorrows, and what frequent heaviness dost thou experience. From whence come they? Joy is sown for thee. The sower is the Son of man. The Father has promised it, and bestowed it on thee for thy portion: thou hast

been called by grace, and the joy in believing is thy birth-right. What is the reason thou art not happy in thy God, and rejoicing in him always? Search diligently for the cause. Depend upon it there is a great mistake somewhere. The Scriptures cannot be broken, which treat of continual joy in God. The promises cannot fail. The promiser is faithful: And yet thou art not always a partaker of the promised grace. How is this? O try to come to the bottom of this error. May the spirit of wisdom lay it open to thee, and may thy sorrow be turned into joy.

Perhaps thou art seeking for some reason to rejoice in thyself. This rejoicing is not good, although it be very common. It has a bad motive: it comes from pride. The end is bad: it is to exalt and aggrandize SELF, which was man's sin and ruin. It is forbidden in Scripture—He that rejoiceth, let him rejoice in the Lord. If thou couldst find something in thyself to be pleased with, thou wouldst then rejoice in thy pride. Sorrow for not finding it may bring thee right; because it may be the means of shewing thee, that thou hast nothing of thine own to look at with self-complacency. What hast thou, that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why wouldst thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it? Hast thou any thing of thine own but sin? Who gave thee grace, and made thee to differ from others? Was it not God? Did not all come from the good pleasure of his own will? He saw nothing good in thee at first to move him to be gracious, and what he continues is to the praise of the glory of his own grace. If thou hast lost the sight of these truths, no wonder thou shouldst go mourning. God will not vouchsafe his joy to them, who sacrifice to their own net, and burn incence to their own drag. He humbles and fills the humble with good things, but he sendeth the rich empty away. The rich rob him of his glory, and he refuses them his grace. Watch therefore, over thy proud legal heart. Be jealous over it with a godly jealousy. And intreat the Holy Spirit to bring

down every high thought in it, that thou mayest exalt God, and he may exalt thee. Remember the promise—"The meek shall increase their joy in the Lord:" seek ye the fulfilling of this: for joy in him is the death of self-seeking and self-pleasing. O beg of God then to keep thee meek and lowly, that thou mayest be willing to live upon Jesus by faith, and to receive all the joy of his fulness of joy.

Perhaps thou art mourning under a sense of thy sinful nature, and groaning under the burden of indwelling sin, as holy Paul did, and as all the dear children of God do, when they are in their right mind. This is godly sorrow, which worketh repentance not to be repented of. It is the true poverty of spirit, to which the Lord hath promised his blessing. Indeed every one that has it is blessed, because it is not only consistent with the truest joy, but also is the very proper temper of mind, in which it is preserved and increased. They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy. Self-knowledge is the breaking up of the fallow ground, and is the ploughing and harrowing of it, thereby making it fit for the good seed, and to receive the enlivening influence of the heavens. The more any man knows of himself, the greater reason will he have to seek the harvest of his joys in God, and seeking by faith he will find them. If he be in the deepest humiliation, he will be then best disposed to rejoice in God. This holy joy generally rises highest, when self is lowest; as the highest tide is always after the lowest ebb. Remember this, O my soul, in the most abasing views of thy fallen nature, and it will lead thee to seek, and in believing to find that in God, which thou hast not in thyself, the empty, and none but the empty, may be filled with his joy. Let every discovery of thine emptiness lead thee to trust more in the salvation of God, and to enjoy more of its blessings. And then thou mayest be with Paul, always sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. Sorrow for self is the greatest friend to joy in God. Self-loathing is accompanied with the

sweetest delight in God. May the apostle's experience herein be thine—"We are of the circumcision, who "worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, "and have no confidence in the flesh." O pray for the same grace, and thou wilt find, that the less confidence there is in the flesh, the more rejoicing there will be in Christ Jesus.

Perhaps thou hast been tempted to feel for joy in some creature comfort, and hast not received it as the gift of God, nor enjoyed it by faith, nor returned him his glory. Thou wast looking below God for happiness, and expecting it from some other object. The world had herein ensnared thy heart. There is not a greater enemy to the children of God: because it has objects suited to their senses, and capable of gratifying them: by which the world is always trying to engage their affections, and always succeeds, when they are not living by the faith of the Son of God; for this is the only victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. See, whether thy sorrow did not spring from some worldly disappointment. Thou hadst dropt thy shield, and wast falling asleep in Delilah's lap: but awaking didst find the pleasure turned into pain. This pain may be very profitable. It should convince thee of thy dreadful mistake in leaving God for the world, and should stop up thy way for the future. Now thou seest the need of being cautioned—Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world: for all things out of Christ are under the curse. There can be no blessedness in them. The whole world lieth in wickedness; it cannot make thee happy, any more than hell can. But it is thy privilege to be delivered from this present evil world, and to be saved from the love of it. This is a blessed part of thy salvation. Expect it by faith. The victory is obtained; see thy share in it. "I have "overcome the world, says Jesus. Almighty Lord, "overcome it in me, as thou hast overcome it for me."

But remember, O my soul, whatever be the real cause of thy sorrowing, there is joy in God, and for

thee: because he is thy God; in whom there is nothing to make thee sorrowful, but every thing which can possibly give thee true joy. The blessed Trinity are in covenant for thee and for thy salvation. And it is thy bounden duty trusting to the finished work of the Son to rejoice in the love of the Father. In the peace of thy conscience and in the love of thy heart thou art required to have fellowship with the Father and the Son, and to be always giving thanks to the Holy Spirit for this fellowship. Every enjoyment of their covenant blessings in earth is a foretaste of heaven, and a pledge of joy unspeakable. What thou hast now by faith, thou shalt certainly have in everlasting possession: for there is a sure foundation laid in the covenant for thee to build thy hopes upon of rejoicing evermore. Thy Father has chosen thee and accepted thee in his Son. He has set his heart upon doing thee good, and he changeth not. His loving kindness is like himself. He has drawn thee by his Spirit to believe in his love, and he has promised to love thee unto the end. He has freely given thee all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, and he reserves the full enjoyment of them for heaven. Nothing can rob thee of them: because he keeps them by his power for thee, and thee for them. How should this help to fill up the measure of thy joys? The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort is thine, with all that his love can do to make thee happy. What canst thou want, but more faith? The Lord increase it, that thy heart and conversation may be more with him. As thine affections are set more on things above, the temptations to the love of the things below will be weakened. The sweetness of heavenly communion will deaden thee to the charms of the world; yea, the world will be to thee as nothing, while God is ALL. And is he not all in all to thee? Consider his nature, his personality, his covenant, his works, his graces and his blessings—view them in their greatness and goodness —thou hast an interest in them all. His wisdom con-

trives for thee—his providence watches over thee—his love waits to be gracious to thee—his holiness and justice and truth are thy friends—all his attributes have engaged his power to bring thee to glory. The perfect salvation of Jesus is thine. His Father is thy Father in him, and has nothing in his heart but love to thee: The Holy Spirit has manifested it to thee in believing to be a perfect, unchangeable, and everlasting love. Whatever the Godhead has promised to give of happiness is promised to thee: And thou dost believe it, although thou art sometimes in heaviness through manifold temptations. But even then there is joy laid up for thee in God. Joy enough in the fountain. It is always full: only thy faith draws out of it sparingly. Enough in God to turn thy sorrow into joy, if faith did its perfect work. O for more faith, that thou mayest have more joy in believing.

From whatever cause then, O my soul, thy sorrow arose, it certainly did not spring from any thing, which faith discovered to be in God. Be assured of this: And learn to improve thy sorrow about other things, so as to see thy need of trusting more and of rejoicing more in God. If thy sorrow be lawful, coming from a sight and sense of thy sinfulness, there is good reason thou shouldst abhor thyself and repent in dust and ashes: But this is also good reason for joy in thy God: because the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. He gives to them the knowledge of salvation and makes them glad with the joy of his countenance. Thus he delivers them from their sins and sorrows. He continues his loving kindness: Surely his goodness and mercy shall follow them all the days of their lives. When they are under temptations to seek for joy in other things, he hedges up their way that they cannot attain the expected good; or if they do, he embitters the enjoyment, and will not let them find any thing in the creature, but vanity and vexation. By which means he would teach them to derive all their joys from him,

and from nothing but him. Wait O my soul, and read, and hear, and pray, be diligent in all means for thine improvement in this divine lesson. Seek the presence of God, wherever thou art. Expect his blessing upon all that thou doest. Account his love thy chief happiness, and be sure, nothing can make thee happy, in which thou canst not enjoy his love. If riches increase, the world smiles, health be granted thee, relations are kind, and all things go well, set not thy heart upon them. Look at the bountiful hand which gives, and depend on the grace which sanctifies those things. They are not worth having, but as they come from, and lead to, God, and so may be spiritually improved. If thou canst live by faith, and enjoy God in them, then they are real blessings: for then thou wilt receive them as his gifts and use them to his praise; thou wilt eye his goodness in them, and admire him for them. And while he continues them, thou wilt be dependent on his grace to keep thy heart from idolatry, that thou mayest love the gifts, only for the sake of the giver. Whatever thou art going to do, ask thyself—How can this be the means of my rejoicing in God? If it cannot, avoid it. If it come with all the world's flatteries, and make thee the greatest offers of joy, fly from it. There is deadly poison under its gilded outside. Lay it down as an invariable rule of thy walk, that nothing can do thee good, but what thou canst enjoy God in. He is the only source of good. And every thing is to thee what he makes it: not what it is in itself in such, all is vanity. But it is good, when God makes it so. True joy is from him, and in him. It is the gift of his grace, and does not stop at any of the streams, but goes up to the fountain head, from whence they flow, and there finds its comforts. O my God, teach me thus to seek my joys in thee, and to make thee my crown of rejoicing.

For thine encouragement consider, O my soul, what he did to the travellers gone before thee in the way to Sion: how he comforted them and made them glad with

the joy of his countenance. He led them indeed through the valley of Baca, of mourning—the only high way to the kingdom; but they found a well in it, a fountain of living waters: they went on sorrowing for their departure from God, but were made glad at their hearts in being brought back by his grace: therefore they wept rejoicing. Happy mourners! And hast thou not the same reason, as they had, to sorrow for thyself, and yet to be exceeding glad in God! Is not this also the case with all thy fellow travellers now upon the road? Their hearts are with God. He is their portion. His heaven is their home. They would not make up their happiness in the accommodations by the way, but in God, their treasure, their supreme good, and their everlasting joy. Neither would they be stopt by the inconveniencies which they may meet with: these, improved by faith, will tend to make them long more to be at home: for these will lead them to feel more of the true joy there is in God, and will thereby inspire them with higher strains of praise and thankfulness. So that every thing they meet with on the road will be sanctified to them, and will dispose them to make melody in their hearts unto the Lord. Their Father and our Father out of the riches of his grace has not only given them matter of thanks, but has also provided the very words to be used by them. Many a weary traveller has found them a rich cordial. His spirits have been raised, his soul and all within made happy, while he was singing the sweet and heavenly hymn. The Gospel prophet, who had seen the glory of Immanuel, and who was the honoured penman of this divine poem, has left us a direction, when any one has a right to sing it, and to make it his own, *Isaiah* xii. 1. *And in that day thou shalt say.* By looking at the context the time here mentioned appears to be the day of the Lord's power, and when the Spirit of life enters into the sinner, and he is quickened from a death in trespasses and sins. A happy, eternally happy day. The same Spirit will be his comforter, will bring him to the knowledge of his

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breaks out aloud into thanks, and calls upon the by-standers to admire the marvellous goodness of God. *Behold*, see here a miracle of grace—*God is my salvation*—wonder with me at the exceeding riches of this love—Why me! What am I, that the most high God should be my Saviour? I am sure he never set his love upon one more unworthy, nor plucked any brand out of the burning, that was fitter fuel for hell fire. O help me then, angels and men, to praise and adore that infinite mercy, which contrived, wrought out, and has now applied to me this salvation with all its blessings. My debt increases, and I want to praise him more: for in that unspeakable gift of his Son he gave me all things, and he has now given me faith, and has put me into possession. I have his word for it, and I believe it—a word of infallible truth, confirmed by promise, ratified by the covenant oath of the blessed Trinity. These engagements cannot be broken, therefore *I will trust and not be afraid.* On the part of the divine covenanters all is sure. They have given me the fullest security that can be, and I may take the comfort of it. They will never leave me nor forsake me, and my faith shall not fail. Blessed promise! I shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Glory be to the *Lord Jehovah, who is my strength*—his almighty arm holds me up, and therefore *he is my song*—the same arm will carry me safe to the end, therefore my heart rejoiced in him, and with my song will I praise him. I will make my boast of his strength: All the day long will I be telling of his salvation. How can I mention too often these infinite mercies of my God? I love to dwell on the delightful theme. It warms my heart, it enflames mine affections, and raises my soul to heaven. My joys are all in this one—*He also is become my salvation:* He is my present salvation: for he has opened the fountain, and has opened my heart to receive the life-giving streams. How can I but bless and adore his holy name, while I am *with joy drawing water out of the wells of salvation.*

O ye blessed of the Lord who have received the same salvation out of the infinite fountain of divine grace, assist me to praise. Your rejoicing with me will increase my joys, and improve my thankfulness. So it follows in the prophet—*In that day shall YE say*—YE, not one only as before; but the many partakers of the same mercies will sing in chorus. They will join in social worship and with one heart unite in the common tribute of praise. *Praise ye the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted: sing unto the Lord: for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Sion: for great is the holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.* Great he is indeed, infinitely—everlastingly great in himself—and to be admired for his excellent greatness in saving sinners. This is his greatest work, and it demands of them their highest praise; and they are glad to give it him. Happy are they now, when humble and poor in spirit they can exalt their Saviour God; but who can tell, how happy they shall be, when he shall exalt them, and make them partakers of his own happiness! Eternal salvation will demand the tribute of their eternal praise; and they will be most blessedly employed in paying it, when they shall return to Sion with Songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads. Crowned heads may well sing: for their coronation day will last for ever, and the king of kings will put such honour upon his royal friends, that all heaven will ring with his praises. They will with one heart and one voice adore God the Lamb; whose gracious hand wiped away all tears from their eyes, and made sorrow and sighing flee away for ever; and who gave them his joy and gladness, such as are even in heaven inexpressible, and will be to eternity full of glory.

O my God, accept of my poor mite. I desire to join all the redeemed in earth and heaven in blessing and praising thee at all times. I would give thee praise continually with my heart and with my mouth. I would

rejoice in thee, and in nothing but thee; for thou art my God, my supreme good, and mine everlasting portion. Let me then for thy mercies sake glory in praising thee henceforth and for ever. I ascribe it to thee now with a glad heart, rejoicing in hope, that my praise will be better ere long and never ceasing. Thou art worthy of all that angels and men can pay: to thee, holy Father, with the Son and Spirit, the Three in one Jehovah be equal and endless praise. To this I give my hearty *Amen.*

CHAP. VIII.

The Believer walks humbly with God, bearing his cross.

THE happy believer is now advanced a great way in his journey. He has been brought to the saving knowledge of God—has received faith in his reconciled God in Jesus—has been taught by the Spirit to love his God—and has found the blessedness of holy communion with him in the way of obedience and duty, which makes him go on rejoicing; then it is become fit and proper, that his faith and love should be tried. He must expect it. It is to the honour of God, to the good of others, and to the establishing of those graces, that proof should be made of them, and that they should be put, like gold into the furnace. This is only a refiner's fire. If the furnace be very hot, one seven times more than it was wont to be heated, the gold will lose nothing. Sterling grace is purer and brighter for every fiery trial. Its enemies, who blow the flame, have no intention to refine it, and sometimes the believer himself cannot see how the means will answer the end: But God over-rules every trial for his glory, and the believer's good, and makes it more precious, than that of gold which perisheth. Troubles, opposition from within and from without, all the difficulties he can meet with,

only serve to purge out his dross, and to render him more fit for his heavenly walk. Herein the grace of God is most marvellous. Such a power, as brought light out of darkness, is continually directing and sanctifying the crosses of the believer, so that not one of them can stop him; nay the greatest of them, help him forward in his journey, and bring him not only more safely, but also more happily to the end of it. Adored for ever be the Father's love, which makes all things work together for his children's good.

When man was in paradise, there was nothing in him but what was conformed to the image of God. His will was one with the will of God. In this state there was no cross. Harmony ruled in the innocent breast. And God looked on his favourite man with delight. They were perfectly agreed, and they walked together in holy and happy friendship. But when man fell, then sin brought in sorrow, in the ten thousand miseries which the body suffers, and in the entire corruption of the faculties of the soul, particularly of the will, now at enmity with the will of God. Hence our crosses. Sin is their fruitful parent; and while we are in a body of sin and of death, we cannot be exempt from suffering: for man is born to trouble, as naturally as the sparks fly upwards: but the unregenerate man does not feel the cause of this. He has no spiritual senses. He is dead to God. He does not know, why he suffers, and he is not sensible of what he deserves to suffer, therefore he goes on merrily, laughing and singing under a load of guilt, enough to ruin a thousand worlds. But when the spirit of life enters into him, and he is made to see his state, to feel his guilt, and to fear his danger, then he begins to groan under the cross. Every day he discovers, how totally he was fallen, and departed in heart from the living God. He now tastes the bitterness of sin, and finds the deadly fruits of it. Although there be a remedy provided to bring the wanderers home, and he is made acquainted with it, yet he is without strength to apply it. He cannot by believing take

the comfort of it. When it is given him to believe, he still has sin and suffering to exercise his faith. Against his corruptions and temptations he must be continually fighting the good fight of faith. From this warfare he can have no discharge but by death. He must take to himself the whole armour of God, and be under arms night and day, or he will never be able to resist the assaults of evil spirits, or to overcome the opposition of evil men. This is the heritage of all the servants of the Lord. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. If they be on the Lord's side, all his enemies will certainly be theirs; so that if they enter into his kingdom, it must be through much tribulation. The king himself went this way to the crown, bearing his cross; and he has assured us there is no other way—"Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and "come after me, CANNOT be my disciple"—he must deny himself what by nature he loves, and must love what by nature he hates; unless he live in this state of self-denial, which is to be his daily cross, he cannot live in communion with me, as one of my disciples. If he be one of the highest of them, yet he must carry his cross: for he has still a fallen nature, and its senses and appetites are always lusting against the will of God, and it is like plucking out a right eye to deny them their gratifications and to refuse them their much coveted pleasures. He is in a body of sin and death, and must carry his cross to his grave, being liable to all the sufferings which mortality is heir to, and all the way mortified under them, because he cannot bear them without faith, nor hold out without patience, and these graces are not of himself, but are the gift of God. He is also forced to carry another cross all his days, even the corruption of his nature, depraved in every faculty, and always inclined to evil. This is the burden and grief of the children of God, under which they all groan. And a sore and heavy burden it is, heavier for being continual, and for its always working against the grace and glory of the Lord Christ: for this infection of na-